



Filming Women in the Third Reich

JO FOX

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Abbreviations

AALD	<i>Auslands Abteilung des Lichtbild Dienstes.</i> (Foreign Division of the Cinematic Service)
DAF	<i>Deutsche Arbeitsfront</i> (German Labour Front)
GPL	<i>Gaupropagandaleiter</i> (Head of Gau Propaganda Department)
NSDAP	<i>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei</i> (National Socialist German Worker's Party) Nazi Party
NSV	<i>Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt</i> (Nazi Welfare Organisation)
OKW	<i>Oberkommando der Wehrmacht</i> (High Command of the Armed Forces)
RFA	<i>Reichsfilmmarchiv</i> (Reich Film Archive)
RFI	<i>Reichsfilmmintendant</i> (Head of Film in the RFK)
RFK	<i>Reichsfilmmkammer</i> (Reich Film Chamber)
RKK	<i>Reichskulturkammer</i> (Reich Culture Chamber)
RMVP	<i>Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda.</i> (Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda)
RPL	<i>Reichspropagandaleiter</i> (Head of the Party Propaganda Department)
SA	<i>Sturmabteilung</i> (Storm Division). Party paramilitary army
SD	<i>Sicherheitsdienst</i> (Security Service)
SS	<i>Schutzstaffeln</i> (Guard Unit) Nazi elite organisation, headed by Heinrich Himmler
TKB	<i>Tätigkeitsberichte</i> (Activity Reports)
Ufa	<i>Universum Film GmbH</i> (Largest film concern in the Reich)
WHW	<i>Winterhilfswerk</i> (Winter Relief Welfare Program)

Archival:

BAFA	<i>Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv</i> , Berlin
BAK	<i>Bundesarchiv</i> , Koblenz
BAP	<i>Bundesarchiv</i> , Potsdam
BDC	<i>Bundesarchiv, Außenstelle III</i> , Zehlendorf (Formerly the Berlin Document Center), Berlin
BFI	British Film Institute, London
HOOV	Hoover Institution for War, Peace and Revolution, Stanford University, Stanford, California

Abbreviations

IWMD	Imperial War Museum Document Department, London
IWMF	Imperial War Museum Film Department, London
IWMS	Imperial War Museum Sound Department, London
NAW	National Archives, Washington
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew, London

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Introduction

On 3 July 1939, *Filmwoche* ran an article entitled 'The Three M-Types'. The author, Hermann Kadow, identified the 'M-Types' in film as the mother, the Madonna and the mistress, asserting that the ideal woman should comprise of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of each.¹ However, during the war, the images of women presented in film under National Socialism demonstrated a wider perception of female identity than Kadow or *Filmwoche* assumed. The Nazis created a female film culture which provided women with a range of roles, from the national heroine and leader figure, to the dancing entertainer and dramatic siren. Surprisingly, roles which one would have expected to see in the Nazi cinema, such as the mother figure, did not appear often. Consequently, and as a result of German military fortunes, film themes changed. This research explores the diversity of the female image offered in the wartime feature film programme and how this programme challenges current perceptions of the National Socialist political position toward women. War, as a catalyst for change, dictated the course of women's lives both on and off the screen. The military crisis of December 1941 inspired Joseph Goebbels to create a female mobilisation drive within his own Ministry, the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (The Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, RMVP). By April 1942, Goebbels had released over 1,000 of his male employees for the army and armaments production, replacing them with women. This move produced a changing female identity embodied within subsequent Nazi propaganda, particularly film.

It is essential to our understanding of the importance of film as a source of Nazi propaganda to place film production within its political context. This is poignant, particularly within a controlled environment such as the Third Reich. The Reich leadership governed the structures of artistic production in National Socialist Germany. The total control and assimilation of art was a central aim of Goebbels' Ministry. At the Reich Party Rally in Nuremberg in 1936, Goebbels explained that '... propaganda is politics. One must win the people over to politics. One must "fire-up" the people with enthusiasm for politics ... A government which controls art will remain forever.'² The Reich government intended to control art and propaganda structures from the *Machtergreifung* (Seizure of Power) in 1933. Goebbels became the Minister for the newly formed RMVP by presidential decree on 13 March 1933 and held the position until the fall of the Reich, twelve years later in 1945. By June 1933, Goebbels was in charge of 'all tasks of spiritual

direction of the Nation'.³ Goebbels, whose interest in films was attested to in his diary, took a particular interest in this form of propaganda.

The film industry was drawn into the structures of the RMVP, with the founding of the *Reichsfilmkammer* (Reich Film Chamber) on 14 July 1933. On 22 September of that year, Goebbels incorporated other art forms (Press, Radio, Literature, Theatre, Music and Fine Arts) into his Ministry. Essentially, film was divided into three main sectors. Firstly, film was incorporated into the RMVP, under the direction of the Minister, three *Staatssekretären* (Permanent Secretaries) and an appointed *Reichsfilmintendant* (RFI), whose tasks were to supervise the control of censorship (*Filmprüfstelle*), film certification and the awarding of the *Prädikat* (system of awards used to categorise film in the Third Reich], film distribution and export, the *Deutsche Wochenschau* (German Weekly Newsreel) and regional propaganda offices. Secondly, film was controlled through the *Reichskulturkammer* (Reich Culture Chamber) and its sub-division, the *Reichsfilmkammer* (The Reich Film Chamber), which supervised the system of film financing, the *Filmkreditbank*, and the film concerns, *Universum Film AG* (Ufa, founded in 1917. *Ufa Filmkunst GmbH* from 17 January 1942), *Bavaria Filmkunst GmbH*, *Prag-Film AG*, *Terra Filmkunst GmbH*, *Tobis Filmkunst GmbH* and *Wien Film GmbH* (all combined under *Ufa Film GmbH – Ufi* – from 28 November 1942). Thirdly, party concerns were represented by the *Reichspropagandaleiter* and their associate film offices.⁴

As a controlled industry, particularly with Goebbels at its head, film became inextricably linked with National Socialist propaganda, ideology and politics. This was particularly true of the feature film which offered the RMVP a means of indoctrinating its audience. In 1943, the Gauleiter of Brandenburg commented on the effectiveness of the feature film as opposed to other film media, such as the culture or documentary film or weekly newsreel, noting that the feature film was particularly useful to the National Socialist cause, because of its 'subconscious effect.'⁵ This subconscious effect on the audience was a means to propagandistic success for the RMVP. They discovered in the later war years that feature films were the only film media to continually command public interest and enthusiasm, maintaining demand. Other film media were rejected by the cinema-goer, because of their overtly political content. By the end of the War, the newsreel had become so unrealistic and tedious in the public eye that the RMVP had to employ measures to keep the audience in the film theatre for the *Wochenschau* screening.⁶ The endurance of the feature film was also attested to by the 1944 RMVP economy drive. Whilst feature film production found that it had less materials to work with and could only produce films of 2,000 metres in length,⁷ other areas, such as culture film and newsreel production teams, were merged into smaller organisations⁸ and the production of political propaganda films was closed down altogether.⁹ Again, this stressed the importance and continuing appeal of the feature film. It remained popular among audiences, particularly among the female population on the home

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front. Cinema provided them with a means of identification, depicting women separated from loved ones and enduring the hardships of war. The cinema also provided women with escapist films, fascinating them with Hollywood-style musicals, high social drama and comedy. Film responded to the changing female identity and needs of the audience.

Gradually, as the War progressed, female identity in society changed. Distinct gender barriers were broken down and even rejected. Goebbels' own Ministry was compelled to recognise the importance of the female contribution to the war effort outside the home. On 21 January 1942, in a memorandum to Reich Minister Goebbels, Dr Flügel, the head of the Personnel Department for the RMVP, proposed placing the following advertisement in the Berlin newspapers:

For the duration of the war, the Propaganda Ministry immediately seeks to employ female employees as messengers, porters, motor vehicle drivers, filing, archival and office staff . . . , particularly those with knowledge of foreign languages and well qualified employees for higher service in the following sectors; Propaganda, Press, Radio, Film, Theatre, Music and Literature.

Only women who are not already in employment will be considered.

Half-day employment is also possible.

Training is guaranteed.

Applicants should send a C.V. to the Personnel Department of the Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, Berlin-W 8, Mauerstr. 45.¹⁰

Although Goebbels rejected the advertisement for publication, the essence of the plan remained. Due to the longevity of hostilities, mass mobilisation was extended to all sectors of the community in order to cope with increasing hardships and casualties.

For Goebbels, the practicalities of 'Total War' dictated that the female workforce had to be mobilised, hence, in late 1941, he began to formulate a plan to enact a small-scale economic and military initiative to remove men from the RMVP, its subsidiary departments and affiliated companies and release them into the army or armaments industry, replacing them with women. His wishes were noted in a meeting with State Secretary, Leopold Gutterer,¹¹ on 16 January 1942. In the minutes, Gutterer detailed that, 'the Minister wants all women from a broad scope to be employed in the Ministry, in order to release men for the army, or to be precise, the armaments industry. Fundamentally, all messengers, receptionists . . . and drivers should be replaced by women.'¹² According to Goebbels' own calculations, by April 1942, the RMVP staff comprised of 594 men and 858 women.¹³ The 'replacement of men by women' in the Ministry quickly became known as the *Frauenaktion* and was to affect the position of women in the film and related communications industries, and indeed in governmental structures, from which they had been previously excluded.

A brief attempt was made by the Ministry to encourage 'Ladies of Society' to volunteer to work for it. However, essentially this failed because it was discovered that the 'Ladies of Society' did not have the necessary skills to carry out the work of the RMVP. Therefore, a paid workforce had to be recruited. The women employed by the Ministry in 1942 were *Reichsdeutsche* and Protestant. Many were married with children. The majority were well educated and fluent in many European languages, with French, Swedish, English, Italian, Dutch, Danish, Norwegian, Hungarian, Romanian and Russian being the most prominent.¹⁴ Many were well travelled. Some had no party affiliation, whilst others were active in the NSDAP, NSV,¹⁵ DAF¹⁶ and, predominantly, NS *Frauenschaft*.¹⁷ The employment of such women began in December 1941 and, by 15 April 1942, Flügel was able to report that of the Ministry's 1,452 staff, 858 were women, compared to 662 before the *Frauenaktion*.¹⁸ Nevertheless, in the early stages of the *Frauenaktion*, women were employed in 'traditional' posts, as porters, messengers, chauffeurs and administrators. In general, women were excluded from technological, military, political and managerial fields.

This mirrored female employment in the film sector. Women were prevalent in the fields of acting, authorship, wardrobe, costume, make-up, editing and animation. Few women penetrated the areas of script editing, film photography, camera assistantship, artistic design, photography, assistant directorial work, direction, prop preparation, specialist advisory work and sound technology. In the key areas of film production, women were most prominent as authors, but were excluded from the three areas of direction, camera work and music composition.¹⁹ In addition to their involvement in the artistic side of the film industry, women also made a valuable contribution in a manual or administrative capacity. The 1944 listings for employment in the film industry, compiled by the *Arbeitsamt*, detailed that women were employed as accountants, cashiers, telephonists, laboratory assistants, cleaning ladies, clerical workers, typists, machinists, porters, librarians, archivists, nannies and even warehouse hands.²⁰

As the War progressed and demand for more labour in the armaments industry increased, women were able to penetrate male-dominated fields. Increasingly, they were employed in political and managerial posts. One example was the *Auslands Abteilung des Lichtbild Dienstes* (AALD). Based in Auguststraße, Lichterfeld West, Berlin, the AALD worked to ensure the distribution and screening of National Socialist films abroad. The task of the AALD was to 'supply all special organisations abroad with feature, culture and propaganda films, as well as with weekly newsreels [and to ensure] projection performances, by supplying these organisations with the necessary film and cinematic equipment'.²¹ The AALD was a subordinate department of the RMVP²² and commanded a budget of RM 3,200,000, provided by the Ministry.²³ The AALD's staff totalled seventeen, of which three were men. Magda von Brevern headed the division and was supported by nine

female office staff.²⁴ The film technical department comprised of three women and two men,²⁵ demonstrating that some women were entering into technological work, although in small numbers. Whilst the AALD was not representative of general trends in female employment, it showed that women were employed in political, managerial and technological work within the RMVP structures. This increased as the War progressed and labour shortages became apparent.²⁶

Women were also penetrating the bastion of masculine influence, the military. In 1942, objections to women's involvement in military issues ensured that women were excluded from work in the PK film units. From 1941, women working in these units were confined to their traditional role of splicing the PK film material. RM Rat Werner Stephan, assistant Press Chief and OKW censor for spoken reports of the PK, ordered that women were to undertake the editing and splicing of PK material as a 'matter of urgency'. He stressed however that this would only be 'a temporary measure'.²⁷ By 1943, however, some women were being considered for employment as drivers, transporting raw materials to PK units and retrieving footage. The work demanded 'the express transport of PK film materials' and required 'the most urgent journeys to the OKW, the weekly newsreel, negatives and the archive film divisions as well as other departments, in order to prepare [the film for release]'.²⁸ Two women were suggested for the job, Frau Alexander and Frau Czerwonski. Alexander made the short list in February 1943.²⁹

The final phases of the War saw the RMVP women drafted into the armaments industry, when male labour resources had been all but exhausted. Women quickly lost the jobs they embraced in 1942. The War was able to give them employment in 1942, just as it was able to take it away two years later. The closing of the various structures in the film and propaganda industry and financial restrictions meant that, by 1944, Goebbels' Ministry was little more than a bureaucratic body. In a desperate attempt to keep the Propaganda Ministry running until the last days of the Reich, a plan was proposed on 14 June 1944 to draft young girls into the Ministry to help with simple administrative tasks. The personnel department noted that 'the RMVP will employ and train young girls as apprentices for office service with immediate effect'.³⁰ It was envisaged that the girls would embrace their duties in 'the National Socialist spirit',³¹ at a time when such a feeling had virtually disappeared.

The progression of the War dictated the course of female employment within the film industry and RMVP. The stages were distinct: from limited employment in 1939, to extended employment under the *Frauenaktion* scheme in 1942, to a wider ranging programme in most sectors in 1943 and, finally, to release for war service in 1944. War enabled women to break into new areas of film production which could hardly have been realised in peacetime. It also accelerated the processes of female integration into the workforce, taking them initially into lighter work and then, in 1944, propelling them into the armaments industry. War demanded

economy and maximum production quotas and women played a distinctive role in this process of financial regulation and redistribution. The *Beschränkung* policy meant that materials and manpower were concentrated in popular areas of film, notably in the feature film sector. Although the *Frauenaktion* was a project which promised success, it was never fully realised due to the constraints of war. The achievements of the 1942 initiative were hindered by the continual drive for economy and the closure of key departments in the latter years of the Second World War. The totality of the war effort in 1944 meant that cultural issues moved into the background and all labour became concentrated in the fight for military survival.³²

These changing roles within the field of employment in the RMVP and film-related industries were reflected by a changing image of women in film as the War progressed. Films of the early years of the War portrayed images of separation, loss and learning to cope with the contemporary situation. These images gradually faded in the later years of the War. The film programme dealt with questions of morality, fidelity, adultery and racial theory. The musical and comedy genres supplemented this programme, providing light relief from contemporary issues.

Whilst a direct link between employment, influence and image cannot be established, a correlation between the stages of employment and image can be observed and noted. The process of employment and image transformation signified the creation of a female film culture and the 'blurring' of gender distinctions as a result of the War. Such a correlation was observed by Kate Lacey in her study of women's role and image in radio:

Reality never conformed to the rhetorical visions of the propagandists. Broadly speaking, civil society, though galvanised by the consequences of a male-directed politics, had been feminised in its everyday reality in the absence of men, while women moved into traditionally male roles in the workplace and as heads of households. The clear gendered distinction between public and private was blurred by a total war, in which the home front increasingly became the front line.³³

Gender distinctions were gradually eroded as result of the Second World War and the study of film demonstrates this theory through the analysis of images and the issues they raised.

It is important to briefly establish a historiographical framework in which to place this research, in order to elucidate the significance of this work within the field of study. Recent work on film in the Third Reich has concentrated on the male image, individual directors or the wider implications of propaganda and the cinema. Much of the research on Nazi film during the War is included in general studies on film from 1933 to 1945. This historiographical discussion, therefore, concentrates on trends identified in the field of Nazi film policy and image, placing

films produced during the War in a wider context. In 1984, David Weinberg identified three key areas of post-war film research relating to the Reich: analysis of the structures of film production, propagandistic content of the films and public reaction to the film programme offered from 1933–45. Weinberg argued that ‘taken together, they help to explain the major administrative goals of the Nazi regime in regard to the film industry’.³⁴

Firstly, an analysis of the structures of the Nazi film industry reveal an explanation as to the content of films and their ideological aims. Of particular interest in this field is the work of Marcus Phillips.³⁵ In his doctoral thesis, *The German Film Industry and the Third Reich*, Phillips argued that the administration of the film industry was dictated by the changing economic circumstances of the Reich and that finance was a driving force behind many of the policies of the RMVP. This was particularly apparent during the war years, when the possibility of new markets, enhanced by European occupation, led to more stringent controls. Phillips stated that the markets and economies of the industry often meant that administration was not necessarily planned, but merely responding to changing fiscal circumstances. The structural argument demonstrated that production, content and image were influenced by administrative constraints and policies and, as such, studies of image should not be seen as a separate matter. Invariably, this has been the case.

In discussing the nature of Nazi film propaganda, David Welch argued that ‘in a highly politicised society like the Third Reich, even the apolitical becomes significant in that so called “entertainment films” tend to promote the official world view of things and to re-enforce the existing social and economic order’.³⁶ Welch’s emphasis on the political nature of both film production and content, with the RMVP taking overall control over both these aspects, was previously discussed by Erwin Leiser,³⁷ who also claimed that Nazi cinema was highly politicised. In fact, Leiser took this argument further to state that the images produced by the cinema of the Third Reich paved the way for the acceptance and adoption of Nazi, and particularly racial, policy making in Germany. Leiser argued that all films produced under the auspices of the Reich were political and propagandistic in content.

The historical debate concentrated on whether Nazi cinema was ‘harmless entertainment’. In the analysis of Nazi film, cinematic historians looked to redress the perceived overemphasis on the political content and intention of films produced between 1933 and 1945. Pierre Cadars and Francis Courtade, in *Le Cinéma Nazi* (1975), argued that, ‘to condemn 1500 feature films as works of little artistic value because the swastika flew over the Brandenburg Gate is to be guilty of the same kind of intellectual terrorism as those Nazi expositions of “Degenerate Art” which condemned 1500 tableaux as being worthless paintings’.³⁸ In 1973, David Stewart Hull furthered this theory, claiming that the films of the Third Reich pointed to the resistance of film-makers to the control of the Nazis and the RMVP.³⁹ Hull

claimed that this resulted in only 25 per cent of film production in the Third Reich reflecting political ideology. However, as Welch noted: '[A]ll [films] went through the pre-censorship process and all were produced and performed in accordance with the propagandist aims of the period.'⁴⁰

A more recent emphasis on the 'entertainment' film and its contribution to the understanding of Nazi cinema has been provided by academics attempting to derive the National Socialist message from aesthetics and the techniques of the filmmaker. This new body of research stems from the early work of Siegfried Kracauer. Kracauer analysed the aesthetics of Nazi film in an appendix to his 1947 work, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*.⁴¹ In this appendix, Kracauer demonstrated how aesthetic analysis could decipher ideological and political messages, pointing particularly to the nature of Nazi film propaganda, analysing film technique with reference to political aim. Kracauer identified that Nazi film often combined fact with fiction, creating a successful suspension of reality. This was primarily effective in the war film, enhancing the image of the military, stressing its power and mythologising its existence. Recently, the work of Karsten Witte,⁴² Linda Schulte-Sasse⁴³ and Eric Rentschler⁴⁴ has brought the study of cinema to the historical debate. In 1996, Rentschler attempted to combine his specialist film knowledge with a more historical approach to Nazi cinema. This work, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife*, set out to place Nazi cinema in its artistic and historical framework. The central methods of Rentschler's study were the contextualisation of film in the Reich, the identification and definition of the role of entertainment in the Nazi cinema and concentration on the aesthetics of film. Within this study, Rentschler made an important identification: '[C]inema in the Third Reich involved a division of labour between heavy hands and light touches.'⁴⁵ This statement moved the clinical debate over the political nature of film away from the distinct arguments presented prior to 1996.

The final aspect of Weinberg's framework concentrated on the debate over public reaction to film. Sources for this type of research are limited and problematic. One source used for the analysis of public reaction to the films of the Third Reich is the SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*, Security Service) reports. Whilst these reports have been dismissed as having reflected contemporary power and leadership divisions, Weinberg validates their use as an historical source, pointing out that the responses recorded by the SD are 'by no means uniform.'⁴⁶ Weinberg further adds that the SD reports highlight the subtlety of the Ministry and its operations, noting that they reveal 'the subtle interplay between the ideological goals of the Nazi officials and the popular tastes of German film-goers'.⁴⁷ Whilst the SD reports have been documented by H. Boberach in *Meldungen aus dem Reich: Auswahl aus den geheimen Lageberichten des S.S., 1939–1944* (1965), specific reference has yet to be applied to film.⁴⁸

Previous discussion of film in the Third Reich, therefore, has ignored the subtle

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nature of film propaganda under the direction of Goebbels. This combination of 'heavy hands' and 'light touches' led to the successes reported by the SD and this combination needed to be explored in detail. The study of the role and image of women in film provides an excellent example of how the ideological message through overt political propaganda could be carefully combined with entertainment films with a subtle, yet poignant, message. Recent research has also begun to look at the role of women and how this role reflected National Socialist ideology.⁴⁹ Unlike other research on women in Nazi cinema, this study concentrates on the relationship between the War and the image of women in the Third Reich. It clarifies the nuances of the film industry and the ever-changing face of the wartime propaganda image, which related closely to the wartime fortunes of the Reich and its leadership.

Another new area of gender research is currently emerging, linking production to image and propaganda. This has already been applied to Germany in the Weimar, Nazi and post-war era. In Germany, Adelheid von Saldern has begun collaborative research into the role of women and the image they presented on the radio.⁵⁰ This complements the work completed by Kate Lacey in Britain, dealing with women's inclusion in radio broadcasting and the creation of women's programming in Germany. In discussing both production and image, Lacey linked gender and political development with the onset of modernity, stating that 'the arrival of radio heralded the modern era of mass communication, while women's enfranchisement confirmed the onset of mass politics in the twentieth century. Both processes have been widely documented and commented upon but generally in isolation of each other with scant regard for their mutual implications.'⁵¹ Lacey identified the relationship between the position of women and the mass media. She argued that the inclusion of women within the media represented a transitional phase from total exclusion from public life to full entry into it and she hypothesised on the implications for a national identity and ideology. This, argued Lacey, was particularly apparent in German history:

the media can both reflect and influence change in society and ideology and the study of the media can give indications of the framework within which the particular meanings are composed and represented in a given social and political structure; further, . . . women's issues and gender ideology were symptomatic of the crises and ruptures in the continuity of this period in German history and . . . such issues serve and affect the symbolising function of the mass media . . . The power of cultural products to define images can work towards the resolution of gender issues or at least highlighting the processes of negotiation which are at work in a given social formation.⁵²

Given the above hypotheses, it becomes necessary to place women in the context of the German media. This study contributes to the current discussion regarding women's position within the media of the Third Reich, drawing on one of its most

popular forms. As the historiographical discussion has demonstrated, the image of women has, in the past, been neglected by film historians. This book identifies that the main wartime feature film audience comprised of women. It is, therefore, necessary that their image and role in film be explored in much more detail, analysing structure, image and effect. The findings of this research contribute to our understanding of both the position of women within the Third Reich and how the RMVP created its wartime images of women, demonstrating that the events of the War influenced the propaganda content of feature films and how they were produced. To date, no major work has explored the possible creation of a female film culture in the war years nor considered in detail the issue of female identity within the propaganda policy of the Third Reich.

The RPL stressed in November 1942 that members of the wartime cinema audience were 'predominantly women'.⁵³ The RMVP certainly used the medium of film to target the wartime female audience. Tickets were distributed to women for Gustav Ucicky's war epic, *Heimkehr* (Homecoming, Gustav Ucicky, 1940), starring Paula Wessely as the heroic female protagonist.⁵⁴ With this in mind, it was crucial for the RMVP to address women's needs in film propaganda. On 24 January 1937, Hans Steinbach, head of the home press division of the RFK, wrote an article in *Filmwelt*, entitled 'What do women demand from film?' which intended to address the desires of the female population with regards to the National Socialist film programme. Even in 1937, Steinbach asserted that 'women represent the far greater percentage of cinema-goers. Women have a much more lively interest in it than men and for this reason, woman has a right to demand that her wishes and desires be taken into account by film policy makers.' Steinbach noted that women preferred to see films with a 'human' story, which concentrated on the emotions. He claimed that women demanded 'true to life stories', with 'natural themes and natural people'. Such plots would complement the feminine character, because, 'this naturalness arouses her interest in people'. Women, noted Steinbach, denounced clichés and sought films and characters 'with which they could identify'. He concentrated on women's emotional nature and advocated that film follow women's innate disposition, providing them with 'highly emotional films and fantasy'. The cinema would create an opportunity for woman to indulge her fantasies and 'dream of her ideal', with Steinbach further remarking that, 'women want to be transported for a few hours to a highly lively and Arcadian world, in which . . . the impossible becomes possible and the unreal becomes true'.⁵⁵

The need for a separate female cinema was reinforced by the belief that male and female perceptions of film characterisation were inherently different. Reactions to *Feldzug in Polen* (Campaign in Poland, 1939) reported in the SD report of 19 February 1940, clearly drew gender distinctions in reaction to the 1940 production. Using the conversation between a man and woman outside the theatre, after the film, the report noted: 'An example of this: In a dialogue a woman was annoyed

about the fact that only a small section of the public . . . cheers. The man accompanying her replied: "It is a serious thing. We don't need hurrah-patriotism!" The woman replied, fairly fiercely, "[t]hat is by the by! Victory is victory!"⁵⁶ The SD report noted that the traditional gender role had been reversed in this instance, demonstrating that the SD reports sometimes provided the Reich leadership with surprising findings. The division between men and women's films was becoming apparent, as each sex preferred a different format and plot. Kristina Söderbaum, a key actress of the Reich, noted in a 1993 interview that she perceived her films to be divided into distinct categories, stating: 'I named these films "men's films", that is *Der große König* (The Great King, Veit Harlan, 1942). I didn't enjoy playing those roles . . . They were never my films. My films were *Jugend* (Youth, Veit Harlan, 1938), *Die Reise nach Tilsit* (The Journey to Tilsit, Veit Harlan, 1939), *Verwehte Spüren* (Covered Tracks, Veit Harlan, 1938), *Die goldene Stadt* (The Golden City, Veit Harlan, 1942). They were mine.'⁵⁷ Like Söderbaum, Goebbels saw the distinction between male and female characterisation, commenting on the Bismarck film, *Die Entlassung* (The Dismissal, Wolfgang Liebeneiner, 1942), in his diary on 13 December 1942, that 'it is a typical man's film and will be turned down by the female world because it does not portray a proper female conflict.'⁵⁸ Goebbels recognised that a female film culture had to be created.

This was partially reflected in the distribution of tickets to the premiere of the 1941 Gustav Ucicky film, *Heimkehr*. The Minister personally requested that the free tickets be given particularly to 'female workers.'⁵⁹ The RMVP even ensured that a mother's film day was founded and free tickets distributed among the maternal community. The creation of a female cinematic culture did not rest purely on the films themselves but also in their advertisement. Magazines promoting the films of the Reich, such as *Filmwoche*, were also geared towards women. The magazines reflected the desires of their readership, substantiating Steinbach's assertion that women had more interest in the cinema than their male counterparts. *Filmwoche* frequently combined film news with features on fashion, short stories and comic skits such as 'What women talk about!' The adverts contained at the back of the magazine also reflected the readership, focussing on beauty products, hair care, sewing machines, cleaning products, hair dryers, children's toys, perfume, clothes, Wegena underwear adverts announcing that 'a beautifully formed bust' changes your life and painkiller adverts for the female ailment of the headache, proclaiming, '*Kopf hoch, Charlotte!* (Head up Charlotte!)'⁶⁰

The creation of a female film culture also demanded a series of distinctly feminine roles and actresses to play them. As noted at the beginning of this introduction, *Filmwoche* believed that the ideal woman was comprised of the three M-Types; The Madonna, the Mother and the Mistress. The ideal woman should comprise one-third of each. *Filmwoche* noted that this theory was forwarded by a philosopher, who almost certainly, in the opinion of the author, 'died childless'.⁶¹

The search was launched for more tangible images of women in film. Roles or 'types' became quickly associated with certain actresses of the Reich, as the 19 January 1940 issue of *Filmwelt* demonstrated in its special feature edition on the image of women in German cinema. *Filmwelt* identified six separate categories of feminine character. The first 'type' was the comedienne. The role of each comedienne was diverse. Ida Wust was the embodiment 'of maternal intelligence' and often portrayed 'the cheerful and experienced woman' as expressed in 'her joy for life.' Wust could extend her own brand of comedic interpretation to all characters, embracing 'the robust mother with the resolute manner, the captivating gossip, . . . the woman of the people and a welcome female member of society, [as a] mother, aunt and mother-in law'. The chatty Wust earned her nickname as, 'the queen of the coffee table'. In contrast, the 'sporting [and] coquettish' Fita Benkhoff portrayed women with 'a heart of ice' and Charlotte Dauert characterised the brassy *Berlinerin* described as 'the little trickster; a fashionable woman of film with a shot of arrogance'. Carsta Löck, 'the wall-flower', was the last of the featured comediennes. Renowned for her 'sparkling wit', she was known as 'the Cinderella amongst young women'. The comediennes added light humour to the films of the Reich and demonstrated that the sassy *Berlinerin* of the Dietrich days was not entirely stamped out under National Socialism. *Filmwelt* sang the praises of the comedienne, stressing that 'they can also play elegant roles . . . But their strength is in popular humour.'⁶² The second type also concentrated on light entertainment within German cinema: the dancing queen. Believed to be the only role which allowed women to preserve their natural grace and 'innate natural gifts' dancers were accorded a primary place in the musical genre. Whether the character danced to Latino beats such as La Jana, Margit Symo or Ursula Deinert or concentrated on a more traditional programme such as Marika Röck, she contributed a key image to the films of the Reich.⁶³

Women were also crucial for fulfilling dramatic and serious roles. *Filmwelt* voted the dramatic women of German films to be 'Wessely, Horney, Dammann, Ullrich, Koppenhöfer, Kinz, Flickenschildt and Körber'. These women were deemed to have the necessary 'dramatic and explosive temperaments' which were an integral part of their nature as cinematic heroines. The characters these actresses played on screen portrayed the difficulties in life, 'their way always [strewn] with obstacles'. According to *Filmwelt*, the attraction of these women was their 'maturity and range of roles', making them an instant success with the cinema-going public.⁶⁴

Dramatic too were the sirens of the German screen, the 'dangerous women'. Distinctions were drawn between the German vamp, considered to be only fulfilling a 'natural' extension of her femininity, and the American vamp, who was a 'disappointment' in her 'luxurious' way of life and in her permanent attachment to a cocktail shaker. The 'dangerous' woman was compared by *Filmwelt* to a cat with the ability to lurk in the background and 'spring out' when the audience was least

expecting it. This feline character always sported a 'cool mask' and her attraction to the opposite sex lay in her beauty and seductive nature as well as the age-old draw of 'forbidden fruit'. The external appearance of the vamp was crucial to her efficacy. It was important to emphasise her 'beauty, charm and grace' with the correct clothing; her tight-fitting evening dress attracting her male admirers into the trap. The actresses most associated with this image were deemed to be Kirsten Heiberg, Sybille Schmitz, Hilde Körber, Camilla Horn, Hilde Hildebrand and Ellen Bang.⁶⁵

The more positive and most prolific image of women in the films of the Reich was that of the love interest. The diversity of this category was emphasised: 'Naturally the woman that one loves is not a "type". Thank God that [people's] taste is so different.' The love interest's characterisation was based on external appearances, with some women displaying the Aryan ideal of blue eyes blonde hair, and others possessing 'eyes as dark as coal' and hair to match. Irene Meyendorff was characterised by her 'slim, graceful ease and the impeccable stature of her legs' whilst Viktoria von Ballasko was renowned for her 'sad eyes' and her affinity with nature and the environment. Karin Hardt often portrayed the girl-next-door type and expressed her 'joy for life' in her roles. As taste was diverse, so were the roles a woman could expect to play as the love interest. Portrayed as 'the little girlfriend, the sweetheart or the wife', she remained 'the girl you could love'.⁶⁶

By far the most praised of images was that of the mother, described as 'the most important of all women'. Despite the fact that 'German film is full of valuable, interesting and charming female roles', motherhood was considered to be the 'most enduring' of all images in the Reich, as it created audience identification. Motherhood was to be 'heightened and renewed through National Socialist culture and education'. Ironically, the most desired image also proved to be the least prolific. *Filmwelt* could only find one image of motherhood to cite in 1940, that of Marthe Pirlinger, played by Käthe Dorsch in the 1939 film, *Mutterliebe* (A Mother's Love, Gustav Ucicky, 1939). Pirlinger and Dorsch were praised by *Filmwelt* who enthused: 'What a woman! What an actress! What a mother! [She] gives an example to the world of what a mother should be.'⁶⁷

The *Westdeutscher Beobachter* reported on a survey conducted by *Die Bewegung*, the central organ for the NSD *Studentenbundes*, regarding perceptions of women's roles in German cinema. One male student commented: 'I want to see women in film, who . . . are companions through life and mothers . . . not women who live in luxury without any feeling of responsibility, and no dolls.'⁶⁸ Goebbels did not have the same vision of simplicity for his leading ladies. From 1937 to 1942, he considered screening the life of Lola Montez. The treatments Goebbels received in June 1937 perceived Montez as an erotic character. Gerd Klinkhardt, commissioned by RFI Alberti to write the first draft scripts, explained that '[i]t would be a real pleasure for a beautiful, temperamental, dancing talented actress to play [this

part], especially as I do not portray her as this “perceived wretch” as one often assumes she is, but as a vamp’.⁶⁹ Unsurprisingly, on 3 July, Klinkhardt complained to Alberti that Goebbels had rejected his treatment.⁷⁰ Goebbels saw the character of Montez quite differently, as he noted in his diary on 30 May 1942: ‘Lola Montez was woman full of life . . . and not at all erotic.’⁷¹

The Reich Minister insisted on the inclusion of female roles in the cinema, commenting that Karl Ritter’s 1937 production, *Unternehmen Michael* (Operation Michael, Karl Ritter, 1937) was ‘totally without female roles. That is too depressing’.⁷² Goebbels noted the success of foreign cinema’s employment of the female protagonist praising in particular Greta Garbo.⁷³ For the entirety of the War, Goebbels sought to find the German ‘Mrs Miniver’ and resorted to banning the Hollywood production in 1944 when he was unable to counter her propagandistic success.⁷⁴

In his search for suitable female characters for the films of the Reich, Goebbels and his wife, Magda, personally selected young talent at their home at Schwanenwerder, an idyllic island in the middle of Wannsee. The film concerns required applicants to undergo a series of screen tests before they were interviewed by the Reich Minister. The screen tests eliminated the weaker candidates. An example of the screen-testing system can be gleaned from a letter from *Staatsekretär* Leopold Gutterer to Goebbels in May 1942. Tobis selected forty-four female and nine male candidates for testing in March 1942; twenty-seven applicants failed the oral test, seventeen failed the photography test, fourteen failed the silent screen test and three failed the sound screen test, shot over five separate scenes.⁷⁵ Successful candidates went on to Schwanenwerder to personally meet the Reich Minister, his wife and various RMVP officials. After the meetings, reports were compiled by Goebbels. These reports demonstrated that women were judged for their physical attributes whilst decisions on male candidates were based upon their character. The candidates were recruited by the film concerns and placed in articles of apprenticeship. An artist’s profile on the candidate would then be sent to the Minister before the interview. The profile naturally promoted the applicant but the Minister’s response often proved quite different. One such example was that of Ingrid Lutz. Her profile claimed that she was

[a] graceful German ‘Mädchen’ type of true freshness . . . From her dance schooling days, she brings with her a supple body, a relaxed grace and a lightness of movement . . . [She has] the developed legs of a dancer though, through the afore-mentioned gymnastics and massage, she could be a bit slimmer. Her face is incredibly photogenic.⁷⁶

Goebbels met Ingrid Lutz on 18 August 1942 and commented that

she has a pretty, winning face. However, her figure is too fat . . . it must unfortunately be said of her that she must loose weight and that she can achieve success only by the

production of a slimmer figure. After half a year, she must undergo another test, to decide whether she has become thinner and whether her articles of apprenticeship can go any further.⁷⁷

Similarly, Ufa proposed Anna Dobricza for the tests at Schwanenwerder in June 1942, describing her as ‘a typical example of a salon lady. She looks good, knows how to dress tastefully and has a charming superficiality . . . she has a beautiful singing voice and could later be employed simply as a love interest.’⁷⁸ Once again, Goebbels countered the Ufa report, noting: ‘voice faint. Already fairly old for a beginner. Face too wide. Too fat in the waist.’⁷⁹ His comments on the test results were often blunt. The testing which took place on 15 September 1942 held disappointing news for the prospective stars of Nazi film. Inge Borgner was failed on her physical attributes alone. Goebbels noted, in a rather cutting tone: ‘Strong acting talent, but inadequate in appearance. This is not only down to her Negroid nose . . . for this reason, Bavaria should not pay for a nose operation. Inge Borgner should try and make her way in the theatre.’ Ursula Zeitz also required a nose operation but would be helped with the costs. Renate Schacht was not deemed to be attractive but ‘with enough make-up experiments could definitely be improved’.⁸⁰ On occasions, Magda Goebbels would attempt to influence her husband and women rejected by Goebbels’ fussy attitude would find a temporary reprieve courtesy of his wife.⁸¹

Women continued to be described in physical terms in the reports, with such terminology as ‘German mädchen type, natural, country girl, attractive, childlike, very attractive blonde type, knowledgeable about her femininity, fresh, childish’, and ‘in possession of the charm of instinctive female cunning’. In contrast, men, judged on their personal attributes, were described as being ‘disciplined, self-controlled, with a fresh comedic temperament, a young man type, in the American style, humorous, comedic’ and ‘young’. The reports also suggested that actors and actresses were typecast. Ufa listings confirmed that certain actresses were earmarked for certain roles. The list saw Anna Dammann as ‘Slavic’, Lia Friche as ‘a farming girl’, and Ellen Helmke as ‘a mother and woman of the people’. The types were as varied as the actresses themselves, with many diverse roles, such as ‘fashionable, sporty, southern type, comic, love-interest, naïve, dancer, serious, salon lady, singer, sentimental, people’s type, strong, dramatic, cheerful’, and ‘able to perform all dialects’.⁸²

During the tests of 18 August 1942, Goebbels finally selected a new female star for the films of the Reich, Conchita Montenegro, whom he described as being ‘of the international format’.⁸³ Montenegro specialised in Spanish dancing and performed the dance of Carmen for the Bizet opera. She starred in Spanish, American and Italian films before moving to Germany to continue her career. Goebbels later considered her for the role of the illustrious Lola Montez.

In employing Montenegro, Goebbels added to his ever-growing pool of foreign actresses in the Reich. Film fans defended Henny Porten in her period of exclusion from the screen, protesting that fewer German actresses could find places in the films of the Reich.⁸⁴ Many of the leading actresses of the Reich were born abroad and of foreign origin: Olga Tschechowa was born in Leninakan in Russia, Lil Dagover in Java, of Dutch parentage, Zarah Leander in Karlstad, Sweden, Kristina Söderbaum in Djursholm, also in Sweden, Luise Ullrich in Vienna, Heidemarie Hatheyer in Villach, also in Austria, Lilian Harvey in Muswell Hill, London, Ilse Werner in Jakarta, Indonesia, of Dutch parentage, Käthe von Nagy in Szabadka, Hungary, Marika Rökk in Cairo of Hungarian parents and Lida Baarova in Prague. Goebbels admitted in his diary on 8 January 1938, that ‘we have far too many foreigners in German film. And new applications are always arriving. I must stop this.’⁸⁵ This over-abundance of foreign actresses became a problem for the RMVP in 1939 when it was not possible to include actresses with associations with enemy countries in the German wartime cinema. The RMVP decreed on 29 February 1940 that ‘all performing film members, who possess citizenship of an enemy country, are to be struck off as members of this *Fachschaft film*’.⁸⁶ Lilian Harvey, Vera Engels and Käthe von Nagy were struck off. Lilian Harvey was already being investigated by the SD for an interview to *New York World* in which she stated that, ‘Few in the Reich are Nazis.’⁸⁷ Käthe von Nagy underwent two years of investigation by the SD from September 1939 to November 1942. Alberti, then *Reichsfilmintendant*, effectively banned Nagy from films in September 1939, seventeen days after the outbreak of war, ruling that she ‘may not be employed in film until she is *Reichsdeutsch*’.⁸⁸ This effectively meant that she was required to separate from her French husband, Paltini. Her film work was called to a halt in 1939 when she was deemed to be a citizen of an enemy state. In 1942, Nagy was still under investigation to decide whether she was ‘politically harmless.’⁸⁹ Only when this check was conducted could she continue her career. Käthe von Nagy never returned to film production in the Reich.

The roles and images of women in the feature films of the Third Reich were diverse. With 433 films being produced from 1939 to 1945, it is impossible to fully embrace every female character portrayed on the German screen in the war years. This book offers a sample of images which appeared to be the most poignant for the target female audience of the Reich, both in the perception of the Ministry and the public themselves. These images attest to the development during the war years of new female identities, reflected in Nazi film culture.

Notes

- 1 H. Kadow, 'Die Drei M-Typen' in *Filmwoche* 3 July 1939, No. 27. The three actresses referred to in the article were Leny Marenbach, Grethe Weiser and Hilde Weissner.
- 2 Bundesarchiv, Potsdam (hereafter BAP) R56VI/34. *Reichspropagandaleiter* (hereafter RPL) Qu/Ho. 26 January 1937. Quoting Goebbels' speech to the *Kreispropagandaleiter* and the *Gaupropagandaleiter*. Reich Party Day, 14 September 1936.
- 3 BAP R43II/1149. Quoted in Welch, D., *Propaganda and the German Cinema, 1933–1945*. (Clarendon Press, London, 1983), p. 12.
- 4 Historical discussion of the Reich film structures can be found in; Biedrzyński, R., *Schauspieler, Regisseure, Intendanten* (Huthig, Heidelberg, 1944); Lenich, O (ed.), *Jahrbuch der Reichsfilmkammer* (Year books for 1937–9, Hesse, Berlin); Sington, D. and Wiedenfeld, A., *The Goebbels' Experiment. A Study of the Nazi Propaganda Machine*. (Butler & Tanner, London, 1942); Albrecht, G., *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik. Eine Soziologische Untersuchung über die Spielfilme des Dritten Reiches*. (Ferdinand Enke, Stuttgart, 1969); Becker, W., *Film und Herrschaft. Organisationsprinzipien und Organisationsstrukturen der Nationalsozialistischen Filmpropaganda*. (Volker Spiess, Berlin, 1973); Maiwald, K.J., *Filmzensur im NS-Staat*. (Notwotny, Dortmund, 1983); Mühl-Benninghaus, W., 'The German Film Credit Bank Inc.: Film Financing during the Years of National Socialist Rule in Germany', *Film History*, vol. 3, no.4 (1989), pp. 317–33; Petley, J., *Capital and Culture: German Cinema, 1933–1945*. (BFI Publishing, London, 1979); Phillips, M.S., 'The Nazi Control of the German Film Industry', *Journal of European Studies*, vol. 1 (March, 1971), pp. 37–68; *The German Film Industry and the Third Reich*, Ph.D. thesis, University of East Anglia, 1974; 'The German Film Industry and the New Order', in Stachura, P. (ed.), *The Shaping of the Nazi State*. (Croom Helm, London, 1978), pp. 257–81; Welch, D., *Propaganda and the German Cinema, 1933–1945; The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda*. (Routledge, London, 1993).
- 5 BAP NS18/357. Tießler to Hippler. Quoting Reich Chancellery Document, Report from the Gauleiter of Brandenburg. Berlin, 24 June 1942. Ti/Ge/Rth.
- 6 BAP R 55/000601. *Tätigkeitsberichte* (TKB, Activity Reports) 19 December 1944.
- 7 BAP R55/656. 'Decisions of the Reich Minister regarding the Responsibility and Measures for the Limitation of German Film Production for the Purposes of the Total War Concept.' 29 July 1944. Goebbels to Hinkel.
- 8 National Archives, Washington (hereafter NAW) T70/8 IB 1007. From *Filmabteilung* (Film Division of the RMVP) to Herrn May, *Abt. Pers.* (RMVP Personnel Department) Pers. 1007/7, 12/42. From a verbal Ministerial decision 31/12/42.

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- 9 BAP R55/656. Goebbels to Hinkel, 29 July 1944.
- 10 NAW *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*. T70/9. Head of the Personnel Department, Dr Flügel, to Dr Goebbels. Berlin 21 January 1942. pp. 6–7.
- 11 Gutterer, Leopold. Born 1902 (NAW T70/9 List of RMVP Employees) *Ministerialdirektor/Staatssekretär*, head of Propaganda Department in RMVP (to August 1940). Gutterer was ranked, as State Secretary, as Goebbels' direct deputy.
- 12 NAW T70/8. Minutes. Meeting of Gutterer with Goebbels, 16 January 1942.
- 13 NAW T70/8. Report on the progress of the *Frauenaktion* from the Head of the Personnel Department, Dr Flügel to Goebbels. 30 April 1942, Berlin.
- 14 Information contained in NAW T70/8 and T70/9.
- 15 *Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt* (Nazi Welfare Organisation).
- 16 *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (German Labour front).
- 17 NAW T70/9. *Personalfragebogen*. *NS Frauenschaft* was a NSDAP women's organisation.
- 18 NAW T70/9. Flügel to Goebbels. 30 April 1942.
- 19 BAP R56 VI/5. RFK Membership Listings, 1942.
- 20 BAK R109II/53. fol. 17 August 1944, Babelsberg.
- 21 NAW T70/1. RMVP Budget. Pers. 1006/4,4-43. 4 April 1943.
- 22 NAW T70/9. List of Subordinate Departments of the RMVP from 1 November 1941.
- 23 NAW T70/1. RMVP Budget. Pers 1006/4,4-43. April 1943.
- 24 Dr Carola Runge, Carla Neumüller, Gertrud Alberts, Irene Hänsel, Lotte Perl, Margot Schumacher, Gisela Meyer, Hildegard Wohlgemuth and Anneliese Wege.
- 25 Johanna Pochanke, Hilda Rostock, Margarethe Glinke, Alfred Kühn and Arthur Rohr.
- 26 NAW T70/1. All information here from the AALD file.
- 27 NAW T70/1. Lektorat Deutsche Presse. Ref. König to ORR Fischer (Deutschen Lektorats). 20 June 1941.
- 28 NAW T70/1. *Filmabteilung* to *Leiter RV, SS Obersturmbannführer Titel*. 22 January 1943.
- 29 NAW T70/1. *Leiter RV* to Personnel Division *Referat III*. 3 February 1943, Berlin.
- 30 NAW T70/1. Dr Schultz von Dratzig to Bohatsch (personnel), 14 June 1944.
- 31 NAW T70/1. Dr Schultz von Dratzig to Bohatsch (personnel), 14 June 1944 *Anlage 2*. Contract.
- 32 For further information on the *Frauenaktion* and female employment in the film industry in the Third Reich, see Fox, J.C., *The Role and Image of Women in the Feature Film Industry of the Third Reich, 1939–1945*. (Ph.D. thesis. University of Kent, 1999).

- 33 Lacey, K., *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945*. (University of Michigan Press, 1996), p. 3. For a further discussion of Lacey see pp. 11–12.
- 34 Weinberg, D., ‘Approaches to the Study of Film in the Third Reich: A Critical Appraisal’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 19, no. 1, January 1984, pp. 105–26.
- 35 Phillips, M., *The German Film Industry and the Third Reich*. (Ph.D. thesis, University of East Anglia, 1974).
- 36 Welch, D., *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda*. (Routledge, London, 1993), p. 47.
- 37 Leiser, E., *Nazi Cinema* (Collier, London, 1974).
- 38 Cadars, P. and Courtade, F., *Le Cinéma Nazi* (Eric Losfeld, Paris, 1975), p. 10. Also quoted in Weinberg, D., *loc.cit.*, pp. 124–5, fn. 16.
- 39 Hull, D.S., *Film in the Third Reich. A Study of German Cinema, 1933–1945*. (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969).
- 40 Welch, D., *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda, op.cit.*, p. 47.
- 41 Kracauer, S., *From Caligari to Hitler. A Psychological History of the German Film*. (Princeton University Press, 1947).
- 42 Witte, K., ‘Film im Nationalsozialismus. Blendung und Überblendung’, in Jacobsen, W., Kaes, A. and Prinzler, H.H. (eds), *Geschichte des deutschen Films*. (Stiftung Deutsche Kinematek, Berlin, 1993), pp. 119–70.
- 43 Schulte-Sasse, L., *Entertaining the Third Reich. Illusions of Wholeness in Nazi Cinema*. (Duke University Press, Durham, N.C., 1996).
- 44 Rentschler, E., *The Ministry of Illusion. The Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife*. (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996).
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 20. Rentschler here indicates that Nazi film was a combination of overt political propaganda and entertainment-based productions.
- 46 Weinberg, D., *loc.cit.*, p. 122.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 Boberach, H., *Meldungen aus dem Reich: Auswahl aus den geheimen Lageberichten des S.S., 1939–1944*. (Hermann Luchterhand, Neuweid/Berlin, 1965).
- 49 Bechdolf, U., *Wunsch-Bilder? Frauen in nationalsozialistischen Unterhaltungsfilm* (Tübinger, Vereinigung für Volkskunde, Tübingen, 1992), Beyer, F., *Die Ufa-Stars in Dritten Reich. Frauen für Deutschland* (Wilhelm Heyne, Munich, 1991), Von Papen, M., ‘Franziska, Agnes, Gisela und ihre Schwestern. Beobachten zum nationalsozialistischen Heimatfrontfilm’, in *Film-Dienst*, vol. 48, no. 10, May 1995, pp. 12–18, Romani, C., *Tainted Goddesses. Female Film Stars of the Third Reich* (Sarpedon, New York, 1992) and Traudisch, D., *Mutterschaft mit Zuckerguß? Frauenfeindliche Propaganda im NS Spielfilm* (Centaureus, Bamberg, 1993).

- 50 Discussion paper at the Institute of Historical Research, London, 1997.
- 51 Lacey, K., *op.cit.*, p. 3.
- 52 *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.
- 53 BAPNS18/357. *Gaupropagandaleiter* to Tießler. Ti/Hu. GP/Ir/St. 13 November 1942.
- 54 BAPNS18/352 Telegram. To all *Gauleiter* and *Propagandaleiter*. From Hugo Fischer, Head of the Military Staff. Berlin, 29 October 1941.
- 55 Steinbach, H., 'Was verlangt die Frau vom Film?' in *Filmwelt* 24 January 1937. No. 4.
- 56 BAP R58/148 SD report. 19 February 1940. *Stimmen zu laufenden Filmen. Feldzug in Polen*.
- 57 *Die Reise nach Schweden. Kristina Söderbaum. Porträt ein Schauspielerin.* Hans-Christoph Blumenberg. Zdf/Sat. I am grateful to Dr Susan Tegel for giving me a copy of this interview and for drawing my attention to it. The author contacted Söderbaum on a number of occasions at a number of different addresses, but she refused to reply.
- 58 IWMD Goebbels Diaries fragments. Al 2604/2 7-20 December 1940. Here, 13 December 1942.
- 59 BAP NS 18/352. Telegram from Hugo Fischer, Head of the Military Staff, to all *Gauleiter* and *Propagandaleiter*. Berlin, 29 October 1941.
- 60 Analysis of *Filmwoche* 1936–7. Complete set held in the British Film Institute, London (hereafter, BFI).
- 61 Kadow, Hermann, 'Die Drei M-Typen' in *Filmwoche* 3 July 1939. No. 27. The three types referred to were Leny Marenbach, Grethe Weiser and Hilde Weissner.
- 62 All quotes here from 'Heiter, nett und gar nichts Schüchtern. Kleines Kapitel von geeigneten Mundwerk', in *Filmwelt*, 19 January 1940. No. 3.
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- 75 BAP R55/657. SS Gutterer to Goebbels. 4 May 1942. Candidates could fail more than one test.
- 76 BAP R55/1323. Terra profile for Ingrid Lutz.
- 77 BAP R55/1323. Report of Tests at Schwanenwerder. Present were Magda Goebbels, Goebbels, Dr Rollenbleg, Frowein, Hamel and Maraun. 18 August 1942.
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Political and National Heroines in Feature Films of the Third Reich, 1939–1945

‘Women who dabble in politics are always a nuisance.’

Joseph Goebbels, 4 May 1942, Diaries.¹

Introduction

It is clear from the numerous studies of film in the Third Reich that one of the key images of the male personae is that of heroism. Historians in the past have fully developed this element of the National Socialist propaganda campaign concerning and directed at men. Political heroism was portrayed in the feature film party trilogy of 1933, using the vehicles of Heini Volker in *Hitlerjunge Quex* (Hitler Youth Quex, Hans Steinhoff, 1933), Erich Lohner and Fritz Brand in *SA – Mann Brand* (SA Man Brand, Franz Seitz, 1933) and Hans Westmar in *Hans Westmar; Einer von Vielen* (Hans Westmar; One of Many, Franz Wenzler, 1933). All perform political duties tantamount to heroism for the Party, for Germany and for the Führer. Heroism is also portrayed through the protagonist possessing exceptional leadership qualities like the Führer himself. The *Fridericus* and *Bismarck* films, amongst others, depicted heroism through historical leaders, renowned for political and military prowess. It has been assumed in the past that these are purely masculine images. This chapter argues that there were indeed examples, though few in number, of heroic women assuming masculine roles in the films of the Third Reich. It is my intention to highlight these roles, challenging previously held hypotheses that the concept of Nazi heroism was *exclusively* portrayed as a masculine virtue, concentrating on a handful of *exceptional* women, who displayed military acumen, bravery and leadership qualities; women who embodied Nationalism and their country; indeed women who challenged the very assumptions of the feminine character as defined by Nazi ideology. The chapter explains the unique character of the heroine, showing the symbiosis of masculinity and femininity and the use of women as vehicles for the propagation of the *Führerprinzip* (leadership principle) and the National Socialist spirit, dealing with the historical heroine (the female counterpart to the *Fridericus* and *Bismarck* films) using *Das Herz der Königin* (The Heart of a

Queen, Carl Froelich, 1940) as an example. The modern heroine will be represented by the film *Heimkehr* (Home Coming, Gustav Ucicky, 1941) in which Maria, played by Paula Wessely, is the embodiment of political nationalism, displaying the rabble-rousing leadership qualities of the Führer himself. These women were hailed as national, and in some cases political, heroines, particularly praised for their endurance and leadership abilities.

The Historical Heroine

The Propagandistic Benefits of the Historical Film

In the films of the Third Reich, two main characters emerged to compliment the *Bismarck* and *Fridericus* genres, which had originated as an integral part of the National Socialist mythologisation of the past: Joan of Arc, the militaristic and principled martyr, in *Das Mädchen Johanna* (Joan, the Young Girl, Gustav Ucicky, 1935) and Maria Stuart, the political heroine, who sought to challenge Elizabeth I's right to the throne in *Das Herz der Königin* (The Heart of a Queen, Carl Froehlich, 1940). These heroines came from historical backgrounds and from foreign countries.

Prior to the outbreak of war in 1939, film portrayed a clear image of female heroism in *Das Mädchen Johanna*, directed by Gustav Ucicky, and released in 1935.² Joan of Arc, played by Adele Sandrock, was the first female embodiment of the Führer figure and was representative of physical and spiritual heroism, whilst the male leader in the film, King Karl, was mentally adept, in their joint battle against the English. The March 1935 issue of *Filmwelt* reported that '[the actress to play] Joan was sought after for a long time. There was rarely an actress so predestined [as Angela Salloker] to make the role [of Joan] so credible in her poignant purity, fantastical faith and fanatical love of her fatherland.'³ The article stressed that, as a physical and spiritual heroine, Joan embodied many of the virtues required in a Führer figure in her demagogic and militaristic omnipotence. The press, particularly abroad, noticed the parallel between France of 1429 and Germany of 1935. In May 1935, the *Observer* reported that 'a Nazi naturally regards the Joan drama as one akin to contemporary German history; "an overwhelming leader – personality saves the people from deepest distress as though through a miracle, forces the State to rise anew and brings peace to the people." Joan of Arc is the Hitler of her day.'⁴ These parallels between the historical heroine and the present-day figure were extended in the war years with the character of Maria in *Das Herz der Königin*.

The propagandistic success of the historical film depended on portrayals being easily mistaken for 'fact' and conveying indirect propaganda messages, relevant to contemporary issues. Parallels between by-gone eras and Hitler's Germany were

often inserted into 'historical epics' to great effect. In his closing speech at the 1935 International Film Congress, Goebbels reaffirmed his commitment to this genre of film, stating that, 'film must remain contemporary, in order to have contemporary appeal. *Although it may take and obtain its subjects for treatment from other countries and distant historical epochs, its problems must be adapted to the spirit of the period.*'⁵ Not only did historical epics serve to convey a contemporary message via indirect comparison, they also allowed the film-maker to portray characters who inspired and indeed created nations. Emil Jannings, a key actor in the films of the Reich, confirmed this intention in an interview for the German radio home service in 1942 stating that,

such figures are rare gifts sparingly given to a nation. They cannot be compared to ordinary individuals. They obey their own laws and follow their own genius . . . They and they alone are the essential embodiment of the spirit of a nation . . . This is why it is particularly significant for our age, in which the idea of the faithful and reliable man transcends all others, that the German film has decided to turn to history,

making historical figures ripe for comparison to the contemporary embodiment of heroism and genius in the Third Reich: Adolf Hitler. Jannings continued, 'The film thus plays its part in the great national-political task of guiding the people towards their innate and characteristic ideals. Not only does history become film, but film must become history. It must enter into and become part of people's thoughts, and play its part in the great construction of the *Weltanschauung* [World View].'⁶ Such theories concerning the propagandistic success of the historically themed film are substantiated by Annelie U. Sander's work on youth perceptions of film in 1944. The book, published by the official NSDAP publisher, Franz Eher, was based on Sander's doctoral research into youth perceptions of film. Sander concluded that National Socialism was not supplying German youth with enough feature films. She demonstrated that the majority of films produced in the Reich were deemed to be unsuitable for young people, with 63.2 per cent of films in 1942 banned for youth screening. As a basis for her research, Sander distributed 2,321 questionnaires across Nazi Germany, incorporating all age ranges and regions. The most popular films surveyed in the course of this thesis were historical films; 1,335 children confirmed that they enjoyed the historical epic, making this the most favoured response given by the youths questioned.⁷ However, in the later stages of the War, there was a small decline in public interest in the historically based film. The *Gauleiter* of Saxony admitted, on 10 March 1943, that the historical film received less acclaim that it deserved.⁸ Yet the historically based film generally remained a popular form of entertainment and the women presented here were perfect propaganda vehicles for the RMVP, embodying the mythological romanticism and the modern-day vigour of Nationalism.

Das Herz der Königin (The Heart of a Queen, Carl Froelich, 1940)

Das Herz der Königin adopted another historical theme, reflecting contemporary Germany: the story of the dynastic conflict between Mary Stuart of Scotland and Elizabeth I of England. In addressing this subject matter, Froelich was able to highlight English callousness and their desire for world hegemony in a similar way to Hans Steinhoff's 1941 production *Ohm Krüger* (Hans Steinhoff, 1941). *Das Herz der Königin* contains two images of politically powerful women, expressing, as in *Das Mädchen Johanna*, two very different styles of leadership: the bravery, heroism, patriotism and martyrdom of Maria Stuart and the cold political calculations of Elizabeth I in their power struggle. The lead role in the 1940 production was played by Zarah Leander, the most identifiable female film figure of the Third Reich. Leander was born Zarah Stina Hedberg in Karstad, Sweden on 15 March 1907. Combining her acting and singing abilities, she was cast as the dramatic heroine. Leander insisted in many of her films that her musical talents were utilised. Ufa confirmed to the RFK, in 1937, that Leander would play the role of a *Trägodin* (tragic heroine), only if it were 'in the form of a singer'.⁹ Leander was a musical entertainer and a dramatic heroine rolled into one. As such, the 1940 interpretation of *Maria Stuart* included musical numbers, capitalising on Leander's popularity as a singer.

The film portrays the life of Mary, Queen of Scots. The film opens in the year 1587 at Fortheringhay Castle. Maria awaits her execution, upon the orders of Elizabeth I. She is calm, praying for the strength of the Lord to help her face her final hours. She reflects upon her life. The audience is then transported into the past: Maria's first arrival from France to face the Scottish nobility, her love for her adversary Lord Bothwell, her forced marriage to the foolish Lord Darnley, her resistance in the face of the tyrannical Elizabeth, her path through motherhood, betrayal by Bothwell, religious denunciation and finally capture by the English forces. The film ends with Maria's acceptance of her fate. *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* described Maria's final moments: '19 years of torment, struggle and accusations; that was the sum of England's "protection" for Maria Stuart. She arises from her kneeling position . . . Proudly and calmly, she takes her last few steps. The fiery Stuart heart of this strong, impetuous woman did not tremble once.'¹⁰

Based on the Schiller play, *Maria Stuart*, and with the working title *Maria, Königin von Schottland*,¹¹ *Das Herz der Königin* portrays two images of politically powerful women. The plot synopsis above demonstrates, once again, the duality of leadership as a theme. Maria Stuart represents active bravery, heroism and patriotism. An impulsive and passionate woman, she fights for Scotland until she draws her last breath. Elizabeth I balances Maria's tempestuousity with her cold, efficient political calculations, highlighting the callousness of the English crown. Emphasis is placed on her political machinations, intended to subdue the rebellious

queen. The main aim of Froelich's film is to highlight the barbarism and cunning of the English, at a time when the Anglo-German conflict was arguably entering its most decisive stage in September 1940. This portrait of English politics was to be guided by the use of the 'truly patriotic' archetype in the guise of Maria Stuart. This form of persuasive image was common in Nazi propaganda. The English, as in Froelich's 1940 production, were seen as a threat to 'peaceful nations' and were portrayed as colonial dictators in the propaganda films of the Third Reich. Such portrayals can be deciphered from *Ohm Krüger*, which portrayed the Boer struggle against English domination in South Africa, *Der Fuchs von Glenarvon* (The Fox of Glenarvon, Max W. Kimmich, 1940) and *Mein Leben für Irland* (My Life for Ireland, Max W. Kimmich, 1941), detailing the Irish struggle against English oppression. These themes received popular acclaim, as evidenced by the SD report of 20 May 1940, which noted that, 'in the last weeks, films, in which people's struggle for freedom is portrayed, have found a generally very good reception, as confirmed by reports from all sectors of the Reich'. The report stated that there was a particular increase in interest regarding films with, 'anti-English tendencies'. This found particular expression in the 'Irish freedom struggle', as portrayed in *Leinen aus Irland* (Linen from Ireland, Heinz Helbig, 1939) and *Der Fuchs von Glenarvon*. Of particular importance for the success of these 'oppression' films was the 'historical portrayal of anti-English themes'.¹² It is possible that the success of these films was partially based on their historical parallel to contemporary events and partially in the identification of an enemy. *Das Herz der Königin* should be seen as being of the same cinematic genre as these productions, highlighting patriotism in the face of adversity.

The treatment of Maria Stuart as a patriot is demonstrated in four particular scenes in the film: the arrival scene and subordination of the nobility, the search for a Scottish king, the political decision making of Maria Stuart, and her martyrdom at the end of the piece. All four scenes emphasise Maria Stuart's leadership qualities and define her as a true patriot in the same mould as Uncle Krüger in Steinhoff's 1941 production.

The film begins with Maria in a cell at Fotheringhay castle, as Elizabeth's prisoner, reflecting upon her life and awaiting the news of her execution. She remembers her arrival at the Scottish court, resuming her throne, after the death of her father. Her first encounter with the Scottish lords demonstrates the opposition to her reign and some of the attitudes of the nobility towards female leadership:

Maria: I know that Scotland does not love me, but I love Scotland. It is our country . . . To wear a crown is not vanity or a game, it is a call from God! This is an unhappy country, at odds with itself, impoverished, lost. This is a lucky country in that it has us. We love it. The dark mountains and the glowing fields. The wind from the sea and

the call of the forest. Our Country . . . do we not want to love it together?

Bothwell: Scotland is a hard country. A land of men and men do not serve a woman. France, Madame, is a land for women. There they will kneel before you, even when you do not wear a crown. They will receive you back with pleasure. Return, Madam, hurry!

Maria: I am staying!¹³

Maria shows her defiance in the face of strong, masculine opposition. She demonstrates her extreme patriotism for the land of her birth, describing the mystical, geographical wonders of Scotland in *Völkisch* terminology. Like many other heroes in the films of the Reich, she encounters opposition, making her task all the more challenging. In this scene, she is confronted by the nobility and in particular Lord Bothwell, who attempts to dissuade her from the Scottish throne because she is a woman. Maria orders Bothwell from her court after his pronouncements and forcefully expresses her intention to stay. Despite her initial strength in the face of Bothwell's assertions, she is forced, later in the film, to seek a husband, due to the rebellious intentions of the nobility and the political machinations of Elizabeth. She intends to marry the imprisoned Bothwell, but on her return to Holyrood, she discovers that he has escaped and eloped with Johanna Gordon. Maria is compelled to marry the bumbling Prince Darnley of England. She is advised by Riccio, her confidante, to 'think of the crown, not of your heart'. Here, Maria observes one of the primary National Socialist ideals: *Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz* – collective need before individual will. She places Scotland before her own happiness.

In marrying Darnley, Maria is transformed to represent 'the political woman', dealing with all aspects of state government without being under the auspices of her husband. Darnley becomes aware of his position as a 'puppet king' with Maria operating the strings and decides to assert his authority over his wife. When confronted by her husband about the appearance of her head on the new coin, Maria tells Darnley that he has no right to question her authority, as he is, '**only** the husband of a Queen'. It is clear from this scene that Maria is to be regarded as Darnley's superior both by Darnley himself and the audience.

The strength of character Maria possesses is juxtaposed with the force and politics of Elizabeth. The role of Elizabeth is crucial in an analysis of the political female leader, representing the best example of determined and successful female leadership. Elizabeth is primarily intended to highlight the barbarism of the English and to draw the necessary historical parallels between Elizabeth's England of 1587 and Churchill's England of 1940. In 1939, *Filmwelt* reported that,

the figure of Elizabeth in this film will be the embodiment of English imperialism, sparked by the fear and panic of the leader due to the possible rivalry of Maria Stuart.

**TO VIEW THIS FIGURE PLEASE REFER
TO THE PRINTED EDITION**

Figure 1. Zarah Leander as Maria Stuart. BAFA 6984

In the Stuart tragedy lies the seeds of all English Empire building and the British lust for world hegemony, substantiated by one historical symbol, which this film intends to highlight. This historical parallel incorporates in one new symbol, [all the issues] which remain topical and interesting and which has consequences for all continents and in all centuries right up until the present day.¹⁴

Das Herz der Königin was one of the films of the Third Reich showing a pattern of English treachery throughout the ages: from Joan of Arc and her execution at the hands of English troops in 1456, to Mary Stuart's execution on Elizabeth I's request in 1587, to the evil, exploitative nature of Cecil Rhodes and the establishment

of the concentration camps in South Africa in 1898 as portrayed in *Ohm Krüger*, to the oppression of the minorities in Ireland in *Mein Leben für Irland* and the final step to Churchill's England of the 1940s. Similar themes are stressed in these films: treachery, stupidity, Jewish connections, lust for money and in particular the desire for world hegemony and suppression of colonies. Such historical motifs enabled Nazi propagandists to shift the emphasis of blame. In portraying the British as world colonists, imperialistic aggressors and ruthless invaders, they placed the responsibility for war and destruction at the door of the English, allowing Germany to present itself as a crusader against the imperious and tyrannical machinations of the English.

The two main aspects of the film, the brutality of the English and the patriotism of Maria, are highlighted in the final scene. In failing to rally to Queen Maria of Scotland, the nobility find themselves puppets of Elizabeth under the kingship of Maria's brother, Lord Jacob. Condemned by the church, Maria is executed upon the wishes of Elizabeth. Maria is holy until the end, as the picture fades with Maria clutching a portrait of Jesus Christ. Maria enters the legions of martyrs in the films of the Third Reich. Like Joan, she has sacrificed her life for her country and, in doing so, has highlighted the oppressive nature of the English crown. She is fearless in death and accepts her fate with magnanimity. Despite displaying the feminine traits of love and maternity in the course of the film, Maria is worthy of a martyr's death for her country and her people.

Zarah Leander, who portrayed Maria in the 1940 film, was the highest-paid performer in German cinema between 1935 and 1945, making an average of RM 150,000 (Reichsmarks) per film.¹⁵ Ufa asked the RfK's permission for Leander's casting as Maria on 21 November 1939¹⁶ and this was granted just two days later.¹⁷ Yet despite the appearance of Leander as Maria, the film did not enjoy great success. Max Winkler, an RfK official, informed Goebbels on 27 October that *Das Herz der Königin* was running at a loss of RM 170,000.¹⁸ By 1941, Leander's popularity was beginning to wane. The analysis contained in Sander's thesis indicates dissatisfaction in the actress' performance in films dating from late 1941.¹⁹ Criticism was also pouring in from her Swedish homeland, criticism which was serious enough to warrant a memorandum to Goebbels regarding Swedish dissent on a number of occasions.²⁰ In 1944, the *Goeteborgs Handels – och Sjöfartstidning* reported that 'Frau Leander has volunteered herself for little Goebbels' propaganda. She has – as far as her talent will allow – spread herself brilliantly over the entire entertainment scene in the Third Reich. [And for this] she has not gone without payment.'²¹ This 'unpopularity' factor may have added to the film's lack of success. Goebbels himself certainly had doubts as to the effectiveness of the propaganda message of the 1940 production. He wrote in his diary on 21 August 1940, 'Froelich film – *Das Herz der Königin*. With Birgel, [it] leaves one somewhat cold. [Its] only magnificence should have been the anti-English and anti-clerical stance and both have become

“pro” . . . I can only work to eliminate what are, in my opinion, the psychological mistakes.’²²

Even after the final touches were given to Froelich’s piece, the film fell short of expectations. Rudolf Semmler, one of Goebbels’ aides in the RMVP, wrote that,

when the Zarah Leander *Das Herz der Königin* was finished, she and her leading man [Willy Birgel] were invited to supper with Goebbels. Afterwards the film was given its first private showing. While the performance was going on, the adjutant fell fast asleep and soon began to snore. He was tactfully woken up by a servant, but Goebbels took the incident so much to heart that he at once begged Zarah Leander’s pardon for what she must regard as an unpardonable insult. Admittedly the film was not very good, but Goebbels was so annoyed with his sleepy adjutant that he dismissed him soon afterwards.²³

Such an incident and the diary entry by Goebbels stressed the disappointment in the 1940 Leander performance, in what promised initially to be a monument to National Socialist ideology. The RMVP still sought the apotheosis of the heroine and Dr Maria Thomas in Gustav Ucicky’s film, *Heimkehr*, released in 1941, offered the RMVP the image they wished to portray.

The Contemporary Heroine

*Heimkehr (Home Coming, Ucicky, 1941)*²⁴

As in *Das Herz der Königin*, Ucicky uses a female as the main protagonist. Paula Wessely portrays Dr Maria Thomas, a German teacher in Poland. Throughout the course of the film, Thomas metamorphosises from the traditional stereotypical female protagonist, as a supporter, teacher and nurse, into a heroic and strong leader as circumstance dictates. Historians in the past have seen this 1941 production purely from a diplomatic and militaristic standpoint. Certainly the most important aspect of this film is the justification of the invasion of Poland in September 1939. The role of Maria Thomas should be analysed in more detail than in previous discussions. Maria Thomas symbolised of the battle on the home front, sending a message to a country in the midst of a European war; the message that conflict and oppression brings out the hero in everyone. She rallies and leads her community of Germans trapped in the alien environment of Poland, securing unity, essential for victory. All sections of the *Volksgemeinschaft* were needed for the battle ahead and women, in particular, could perceive their role in the future as an important one for the war effort. The character of Maria amalgamated masculine and feminine virtues, as a spiritual leader, community figurehead and harbinger of the national message, in addition to the more customary image of

mother, nurse and teacher. The image is linked to the propagandistic purpose of the film. Ucicky's piece was aimed primarily at a home audience and, in particular, at the **female** home audience. This propagandistic intention of *Heimkehr* is confirmed by a telegram sent to all *Gauleiter* and *Propagandaleiter* by Hugo Fischer, head of the military staff, on 29 October 1941, which stated,

The Reichpropagandaleiter (RPL) in conjunction with the Partei-Kanzlei asks you to personally arrange a premiere [of this film] in every regional capital. You are asked to invite in the first instance the war-wounded and workers in the heavy industries to these premieres. **In particular, I place emphasis on the female workers.**²⁵

From this perspective, the film incorporates a dual propaganda message, thematically portraying a militaristic world view of a political situation and personally, through the life of Maria Thomas and her compatriots, an emotional and rallying call to the German wartime population. Various themes are exposed through an analysis of each sequence in the film. This chapter discusses the various scenes in order to discern why *Heimkehr* was considered by Goebbels and the RMVP to be one of the greatest achievements in German cinematic persuasion.

The film opens with images of the soil. These first shots are indicative of the struggle for *Lebensraum*, a policy which was concentrated on the Eastern lands, where Germany had lost territories under the 1919 Treaties. Combined with this political significance, the push to the East incorporated elements of Nazi *Völkisch* philosophy. In the film, the soil represents the *Heimat*. *Heimkehr* both begins and ends with sequences involving the soil, acting as a statement regarding the September invasion of Poland, and emphasising the significance of the soil in Nazi ideology.

The first character scenes place Wessely in a familial background. The family here is happy and united. Women are assuming their traditional roles as mothers, wives and nurses. This German familial unit is juxtaposed with the following scenes surrounding Wessely's school, intended to portray the Poles as anti-humanitarian barbarians. The Poles burn down the German school, as the schoolchildren look on in horror. The Poles take a bird, the school pet, with the intention of killing it. Wessely is forced to intervene to save the bird, demonstrating the benevolence of the German as opposed to the savagery of the Pole. Inside the school, the globe is in flames, signifying later events.

As a direct result of this unprovoked attack on the German school, Maria is forced to seek the help of the Polish authorities, initiating the first transfiguration of her character. This had special significance for the women of the Reich, creating audience identification with the film, crucial for propagandistic success. Maria is forced from the 'norm', in familial surroundings, into a masculine existence, by the strains of persecution, and later war. This theme held particular appeal for the female audience targeted by the RMVP in 1941. Maria protests about the treatment

of the German school to an unsympathetic local official. Maria is courageous, confronting the Polish aggressor about the welfare of the German population of the district. The question of nationality is raised and Maria becomes the definitive embodiment of German nationalism. Maria uses various characteristics in order to define her Teutonic status, in this instance, stating that ‘German is my mother tongue,’ highlighting the linguistic aspect of nationalism. Her ‘Germanism’ is further defined by her heritage, as she verbally traces back her family history, dwelling on other Nazi preoccupations such as heritage, bloodlines, eugenics and hereditary laws. Maria Thomas emphasises her commitment to the German nation and her role as a German citizen in later scenes regarding the local Jewish population:

- Jewish Merchant: Ay, ay, ay what do my joyous eyes see before me? The Lady Doctor? Would you like to see the latest designs from Paris? When you try these on, you will look like a Princess.
- Maria: No, Solomon’s son, you know the answer well. We do not buy from Jews.
- Merchant: How can you speak such harsh words, Doctor, when you know that I would like very much to trade with the Germans? And why? Because they are fair. The German people – a great people, a proud people, and the Führer, that Hitler, an ingenious man – what a shame he doesn’t want anything to do with us poor Jews.
- Maria: [Laughing] I’ll write and tell him!
- Merchant: [Calling after her] How can you make such fun of the poor Jews, when I am friendly to you and want nothing more than to trade with you? [Shaking his fist] Let the earth open up and divide you like the Korab and his gang.²⁶

This scene serves three main purposes. Firstly, it ‘exposes’ the nature of the Jew. The Jew assumes his ‘natural’ role as a devious merchant, who uses flattery in order to sell, persuade or influence. This sequence also demonstrates that when the Jew is refused, he becomes nasty and abusive, establishing that behind the charming exterior is something more sinister and threatening. This portrayal of the Jew was common in the films of the Third Reich, and its employment in *Heimkehr* is intended to further the character of Maria Thomas. In refusing the Jew, Maria’s commitment to the German racial way of life is emphasised. Her refusal of Jewish trade indicates her belief in National Socialist racial theories and ties her more definitely to the Fatherland. The scene also demonstrates to the female audience the power of the purse, bolstering a common wartime campaign stimulating autarky. Here, Maria is aligning herself with the Reich campaign to boycott Jewish merchants and shopowners, encouraging German women to buy from

German and not Jewish vendors, for reasons of racial superiority and autarkic economic policy. The purpose of this sequence is threefold and particularly aimed at the female audience: justification of racial policy, alignment to the Germanic psyche, developing unity along national identity lines and underlining the economic power of the German housewife.

Having established the nature of the Jew, Ucicky then concentrates on demonising the Pole, stressing their barbarism and war-mongering tendencies towards the innocent and peace-loving German minorities. The main purpose of this defamatory portrayal was to justify the German invasion of Poland in September 1939. Ucicky depicts the German invasion as a quest to rescue persecuted pockets of German people, placed in alien environments by the victors of the First World War, under the conditions of the ill-received Treaty of Versailles. The plight of the minorities was highlighted in this 1941 production, just as it was in 1938 when the Reich campaigned for the return of the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia.

As emphasised earlier, the SD report of 20 May 1940 stressed the German public's interest in films depicting minority struggles. The report also noted interest in the Polish and Czech minority questions.²⁷ Gustav Ucicky, who directed *Heimkehr*, took a particular interest in minority issues. A letter from the Vice-President of the RFK, on 25 April 1938, thanked him for his contribution to a promotional film project for the Sudeten German vote, stating that his 'work on the electoral film' contributed directly to the 'yes vote', and the 'wonderful victory of National Socialism'.²⁸ For this task, he received the sum of RM 1,500. So important was the portrayal of minority issues that these films were 'made mobile to places without cinemas'. The human aspect of the campaign was highlighted in the promotional films, combining footage of 'the electoral battle in Sudeten Germany', with images of 'the Sudeten German people's lives'.²⁹ *Heimkehr* was a part of this cinematic campaign, depicting the German people as the repressed captives of hostile nations.

This is reflected in the two main images of the Pole forwarded by Ucicky: that of the aggressive militarist and that of the persecutor. The first image of the military aggressor was crucial to the propagandistic success of the 1941 film, as it shifted culpability for the current wartime situation from the Germans to the Poles, convincing the home populace that the Germans were merely rectifying past injustices and present persecution. The nature of the Pole is particularly emphasised in a scene where Maria and her fiancé go into Luzk to see a film. On their way to the theatre, a military march past is staged, suggesting to the audience that the Polish authorities are acting in a militaristic and threatening manner in their overt declarations of military strength and superiority. There is a rumour of war in the air, generated and contrived, according to Ucicky's film, by Polish, and not German, aggression. This theme is emphasised in contemporary perceptions of the film. The Ufa publicity booklet informed audiences that, 'this devoted community of Germans experienced the wild wing beating of the Polish double eagle in early

1939 [and were] helplessly exposed to hate and the blood thirst of this *Soldateska*, who believed that they could march on Berlin and believed in the guarantee which the British so stringently . . . followed'.³⁰ This view was supported by the *Völkischer Beobachter*, which reported in October 1941 that,

the destinies of German men and women in the late summer of 1939, as depicted in this notable motion picture, bring us face to face with great historical decisions. Germany has never had imperialistic aims; it does however uphold the right to life of the German people and their physical and spiritual security . . . What we are being reproached for today by those who dominate the Channel and the Atlantic dates back to the decades preceding 1 September 1939 – the brutal desire of the plutocratic democracies to annihilate Germany and the German people, to murder them and destroy them. The episodes described in the film stand for hundreds of thousands of similar episodes.³¹

The militarism emphasised in both reports was intended to focus attention on the Allied powers and away from German aggression. The film, and publicity surrounding it, played on the victimisation of the German minorities by barbarous and uncivilised locals.

This theme of victimisation is developed in the Ucicky piece in many scenes. For example, Dr Thomas and her fiancé enter the cinema, which is showing a Twentieth Century Fox production, highlighting the international nature of Polish culture. The American film, tinged with Jewish influence and devoid of traditional and nationalistic culture, is intentionally contrasted with the German cinemas in 1941, which had, from 28 February 1941, banned all American productions, due to their lack of culture and *Völkisch* significance. A newsreel of a Polish military march past heralds persecution for the three Germans in the audience. The audience cheers as Polish tanks, guns and weapons roll past on the screen, accompanied by the Polish national anthem. As the Germans refuse to sing, they are jeered and taunted; 'We must exterminate the German pigs! Out with the Germans.'³² They are eventually attacked by the Polish audience, resulting in the death of Maria's fiancé. In harassing Maria, the Poles are depicted as disrespectful and cowardly, attacking a helpless woman, who is unable to physically defend herself. After having dragged the body of her fiancé out of the cinema, Maria seeks help. Ucicky now consolidates his damning picture of the Polish nature in one sequence which combines all their vices: the police are rude and unhelpful, giving the German audience an idea of how 'Polish justice' operates. Maria is unable to move easily through the jostling and jeering crowds, the dying man is passed by and overlooked by cinema goers who are only concerned with getting into the theatre, the Catholic hospital refuses to treat him as he is German, highlighting the dual hypocrisy of the Church and the God-fearing Poles. Finally she is confronted by the town official, who is only concerned for his own political position, refusing to help Maria in her time of need. As a result of the Polish reaction, Maria's fiancé, Dr Mutius, dies.

Maria is forced to bury him alone. The speed of the shots detailing combined vices of the Poles serve to quickly and effectively build a picture of the Polish character. Maria emerges from this experience as the heroine, striving against the odds to confront the Polish authorities and suffering a great loss at the hands of the Poles.

The persecution heightens as the film progresses. Martha Launhardt is jeered by a group of Poles in the street. According to the *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*, she was 'stoned to death by an inhuman horde'.³³ A swastika, worn as a symbol of faith, is ripped from her neck and discarded. This scene further enhances the portrait of the Pole as a cowardly aggressor, persecuting the weak and helpless. A crime against a woman is perceived to be the most heinous of all crimes.

As in *Wunschkonzert* (Request Concert, Eduard v. Borsody, 1940), radio plays a key part in communication to the front lines and, in this case, the stranded Germans. Hope for the community is gleaned from a radio speech by Hitler, which promises contentment and expresses a belief in the future. This broadcast is interrupted when 'the door of the barn is ripped down [and] policemen stormed in like biting dogs and rounded up the Germans'.³⁴ Conditions in the prison are unbearable. They are all crammed into a dark cell. Everyone is traumatised, crying and begging for help. The *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* described the conditions: 'In a narrow vault, 200 Germans, 200 men, women and children suffer. They cannot stand or lie down. Children cry themselves to sleep. Mothers pray. The men clench their fists in powerless wrath'.³⁵ The Polish soldier sadistically shines a light on the company, taking pleasure in their discomfort. The characters' faces are obscured, adding to the sense of confusion and despair. Hysteria and panic break out. Here Maria replaces Hitler as the messenger of hope and peace. Maria is a quiet and calming influence; she is hope. She represents Germany. This aspect of Maria's character has already been developed by Ucicky. She is a figure possessing many of the virtues of the National Socialist; she is hope, the future and the soil. As men in the cell despair, she is the embodiment of perseverance, dealing with persecution and agony in a calm and inspired manner. Although Maria is unable to defend herself physically, she is a spiritual tower of strength. The hope she inspires is crucial for morale and the establishment of a communal sense of national identity, aiding unity. Her speech rallies the flagging prisoners:

Friends, we are going to get home, that's for sure. It is quite certain, somehow we'll get home. And why shouldn't we? Everything is possible . . . At home in Germany people are no longer weak, and they're no longer unconcerned at what happens to us. On the contrary – as Fritz is always telling me – they're very interested in us. And why shouldn't we be able to go home if that's what we want? Think how it will be when everything around us is German and when you go into a shop, it won't be Yiddish or Polish you hear but German . . . Everything around us will be German. And we'll be right in the middle of it, in the heart of Germany. Think how it will be, friends! And why shouldn't

it be so? We'll be living in the good old warm soil of Germany. In our own country and at home. At night in our beds, when we wake from our sleep, our hearts will suddenly beat quicker with the sweet knowledge that we are sleeping in Germany, at home in our own country, and all around us is the comforting night and a million German hearts beating softly as one – you are home, my friend, at home with your own people. It will be a really marvellous feeling for us, that the seeds in the fields and the crops and the rocks and the waving grass and the swaying branches of the hazelnut bushes and trees – that all this is German. German like us and belonging to us, because it has all grown from the millions of German hearts which have been laid to rest in the earth and have turned into German soil. Because we don't only live a German life, we also die a German death. And even when we are dead, we are still German, a real part of Germany. A handful of soil for our grandchildren to grow corn in. And from our hearts the vines will grow high in the sun – the sun which doesn't burn but shines brightly on them and gives the grapes their sweetness. And all around the birds are singing and everything is German.³⁶

Maria is the essence of National Socialism. She defines the various aspects of German nationalism in this speech. She unifies the crowd through her belief in the future and in her hope that they will be amongst like-minded people with a common culture, language, heritage and identity. Maria's faith in Germany is unwavering and in her protestations, she inspires the weak, the blind, the hungry, the young, the old, the beaten and the persecuted. Even in her own hour of despair, she is a beacon of light for the community. Directed once again at women, the *Kleine Frauenblatt* found inspiration in Maria Thomas, reporting that, '[she] counteracts the grief with strong words of comfort . . . and promise. That weary face, with straggly hair, pressed against the dungeon bars, she speaks as if she is a clairvoyant.'³⁷ Ucicky concentrates attention on Maria Thomas, by lighting her face alone, whilst obscuring the others, who sit in darkness. Her face is portrayed as angelic, heralding hope and faith. This is similar to the lighting techniques used in the 1933 party trilogy, presenting Maria as the sole heroine of the piece, showing the inspirational and demagogic qualities of a leader. She later leads the Germans in a nationalistic song, '*Deutsche Heimat*' (German Homeland). The song is sung by the prisoners with energy and gusto, even by the weak. The soldiers hear them and comment, 'Hear them! They won't be singing for much longer.' The soldiers are drinking, smoking and gambling, allowing Ucicky to exploit the perfect juxtaposition: the corrupt Poles as opposed to the persecuted Germans, who prefer to direct their energies into singing a pure, national hymn – purity versus evil, virtue versus vice. The pure sound rings out across the prison: a hymn for the homeland.

The Polish extermination of the German prisoners begins early the next morning and is only interrupted by the arrival of the German troops. The very appearance of the German Army is enough to give hope to the prisoners and to prompt the

cowardly Polish Army to flee. The prisoners rejoice. The film then switches to a newsreel style, persuading the audience to believe in the authenticity of the piece. The German tanks roll into Luzk, 'with superhuman strength',³⁸ liberating the town and saving the German population from further persecution and barbarity. After their rescue, the community return to the homeland. The dream and reality of this action coincide to portray a picture of complete happiness. Whilst they are waiting for their transport, a woman gives birth, representing the 'rebirth' of society. The children, symbolically, are the first to return to the homeland. They are the youth, the new life-blood of the nation, representing new life and new beginnings. The piece ends with Maria and her father looking to the future: 'My homeland, so beautiful, so large . . . It is in our hearts. It is all about faith. Home, home, home to stay!' The convoy heads towards Germany. They triumphantly enter their homeland, greeted by a picture of Adolf Hitler and heralded with the national anthem, 'Deutschland, Deutschland über alles.' The sun sets on the soil.

Modifications to the film suggested by Walther Tießler, RPL, highlight the propagandistic intentions of the piece. In a memorandum to Dr Fritz Hippler,³⁹ dated 9 April 1941, Tießler suggests that instances of 'human pettiness' should be eradicated from the film. In the true spirit of National Socialism, the original film included a scene which dictated that Maria Thomas and Launhardt, both having lost their partners, should marry and perpetrate the race. This was decided by Tießler to be 'superfluous'. Tießler also warned against the over-propagation of the German ideal, desiring a limit to Maria's 'bleating' and 'sensationalism'.⁴⁰ Certainly Goebbels' involvement with the production is confirmed by his diary entry of 24 October 1941, in which he comments, 'I am happy that, in February of last year, I gave my inspiration in order to create a film . . . which has led to such a great political and artistic success.'⁴¹

The film was awarded the supreme *Prädikat* of 'Film of the Nation'. The population responded accordingly. Sander reported in her thesis on youth reaction to film that *Heimkehr* was the fifth most popular production released during the Third Reich, receiving 338 positive responses.⁴² *Heimkehr* was only placed behind the historical epics *Der große König* (The Great King, Veit Harlan 1942), *Bismarck* (Wolfgang Liebeneiner, 1940), *Die Entlassung* (The Dismissal, Wolfgang Liebeneiner 1941) and *Friederich Schiller* (Herbert Maisch, 1940), making it the most popular contemporary and politically themed film of the period and the highest-ranking film with a female as the main protagonist.

The political importance of *Heimkehr* was illustrated by the *Gauleiter* for East Hanover, who countered the prevailing argument that the cinema should provide more entertainment feature films in wartime, commenting that,

This film can be regarded as the best propaganda medium of today. It may be ascertained that all educational action . . . regarding the behaviour of the foreigner, in particular the

Pole, has not made such an impression as this film, which every Volksgenosse must see. It may be said that this film belongs to a category which represents National Socialist propaganda in the truest sense of the word. One . . . wishes that our film industry will intensify and heighten the emotions of the masses with regard to such problems and will engage in the great . . . task of the enlightenment of the German people . . . Generally, it may be said that it is necessary to show ‘society-based’⁴³ films to the German people in wartime, so that they have some hours of relaxation and happiness. However . . . if the German people are to be educated in preservation and endurance, it will be necessary, more than ever, to [portray] . . . [real] life to the Volksgenossen.⁴⁴

Hugo Fischer, head of the Military Staff, added, ‘The film, *Heimkehr*, is not only of an unusually [high standard] of artistic merit but also of particular political value. It is an appeal to the German people, to show how small the sacrifices of the homeland are which are comparable to a daily struggle, led by the *Volks-deutsche*.’⁴⁵ These statements stress the impact of the film on the home front, whose audience was primarily female. The film, however, had a dual target, like so many films of the period, intended to affect both home and front-line cinema viewers.

The message regarding the perception of Poland was also clarified at a special army premiere by Pg. Josef Gloeckner, who reminded the troops of, ‘the struggle of the Germans in Poland combined with a call never to let a “false sense of sympathy for Poland” arise’.⁴⁶ The political importance and rallying effect of the film encouraged Goebbels and the RMVP to order the distribution of free premiere tickets to the armed forces, local hospitals, the war-wounded, the heavy industrial workers and female labour⁴⁷ and the recognition by the RMVP that all RPL representatives were to regard the film as having the same political importance as the earlier anti-British production, *Ohm Krüger*.⁴⁸ As such, the film made a definite contribution to the military campaign of the Reich and to the rallying of the home populace, who were gradually tiring of the conditions the war had imposed on them and who were searching for a new crusade. *Heimkehr* provided them with some encouragement to persevere.

The importance of the film is also reflected in the salary of the leading actress, Paula Wessely, who received RM 150,000 for this role alone,⁴⁹ equalling the fee commanded by Zarah Leander, the Reich’s highest-paid performer.⁵⁰ In the post-war era, a ban was placed on Wessely, lifted in January 1946, and extended permanently to the film *Heimkehr*. Wessely, like many others, protested that she was merely a puppet of the NSDAP and Goebbels. Her daughter, Elisabeth Orth, stated,

her picture hung in many soldier’s lockers during the war. She was a pin-up girl for these soldiers, often just a gentle, quiet and motherly face from home. Today when I recollect with difficulty my thoughts . . . a happy life for my mother at this time must have seemed impossible . . . the decision by the Allied Military government to ban . . .

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the film she made with my father [Atilla Hörbiger] in 1941 . . . drove right through the middle of her heart, her soul and mind.⁵¹

It was impossible for Wessely to decline this role as her refusal to join the NSDAP and her sympathy for the Jewish cause had already been noted by the Gestapo.⁵² This point was stressed by the post-war publication, *Das Kleine Volksblatt*, which reported in December 1945 that ‘she appeared in *Heimkehr*, when she could have refused the offer. By a refusal she would definitely jeopardise her career and perhaps more than that.’⁵³

Conclusions

From an analysis of these films, one can see that the females took on the role of the main protagonist, combining between them the masculine virtues of heroism. These heroines embodied National Socialist ideals: demagogy, leadership, martyrdom, perseverance in the face of adversity, faith, personal strength, fortitude, courage and dedication to the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The characters actively embraced purely masculine domains such as the political and the physical. The heroines presented to the German audience in these films were certainly comparable to the heroes of the 1933 party trilogy films and the productions of war-epic directors such as Karl Ritter. Their heroism, patriotism and politicisation make them worthy complementary figures to their male counterparts, propagandistically effective as historical figures or contemporary compatriots. Women were an integral part of the heroic image as propagated by the dictators during the 1930s and 1940s; an image which nurtured and enhanced a flagging populace, consumed by the pressures of wartime hardships. Such women often propagated and enunciated political ideals on behalf of the regime and provide an interesting and alternative comparison to traditional perceptions of women in film, such as mothers and wives.

Notes

- 1 Lochner, L.P., *op.cit.*, p. 81.
- 2 Further information on the film can be found in the *Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv*, Berlin (hereafter BAFA) 10510.
- 3 *Filmwelt*. 17 March 1935. No. 11. In BFI.
- 4 *Observer*, 12 May 1935. Wiener Library Clipping Collection. Reel 46.
- 5 *Cinema Quarterly*, Autumn 1935. Italics my own.

- 6 Talk by Emil Jannings, 'History becomes Film, Film becomes History: The Function of the Historical Film'. German Radio Home Service. 1293m. 08/10/42. Broadcast at 18.45 (14 Mins). Wiener Library Clippings Collection. Reel 105.
- 7 Sander, A.U, *Das Junge Deutschland. Amtliches Organ des Jugendführers des Deutschen Reiches. Sonderveröffentlichung Nr. 6 Jugend und Film.* (Franz Eher – Zentralverlag der NSDAP, Berlin, 1944).
- 8 BAP NS18/362(b). *Gauleiter* of Saxony to Tießler. 10 March 1943. II B 1/Bü/Kah.
- 9 BDC Zarah Leander. RKK 2600 Box 0121. File 14. Ufa to RFK II A Schr. 15 February 1937.
- 10 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*. Nr. 3143. BAFA 9684.
- 11 BAP R55/375 Ufa Plan 19. 1938/9. Published 20 November 1937.
- 12 BAP R58/184. SD Report No. 89. 20 May 1940.
- 13 A discussion of the musical composition accompanying this scene can be found in *Filmkurier*. Nr. 177. 31 July 1940. p. 3. BAFA 9684.
- 14 'Ballade von Leben, Liebe und Tod. Bericht von der Formung des Ufa-Films "Das Herz einer Königin"', in *Filmwelt*, 8 December 1939. No. 49.
- 15 BAP R55/949. Dated 25/9/ 1939. Total list of performers salaries up to and including September 1939. Later documents confirm that Leander's salary remained in this region.
- 16 BDC Leander, Zarah. RKK 2600 Box 0121. File 14. Application from RFK from Ufa. IIA Br./cg. 21 November 1939.
- 17 BDC. RKK 2600 Box 0121. File 14. Confirmation received by Ufa 23 November 1939. Fsch.D/8535.
- 18 BAP R55/1319. Winkler to Goebbels, 27 October 1939.
- 19 Sander, A.U. *op.cit.*, Tables.
- 20 BAP R55/662 and BAK R109 I/2874.
- 21 BAP R55/662. RFI to Goebbels, Berlin, 29 November 1944.
- 22 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.* (Band II. October–December 1941). Here 21 August 1940.
- 23 Semmler, R., *Goebbels – The Man next to Hitler.* (Ams Press, New York, London, 1947). pp. 161–2.
- 24 Viewing copy. Imperial War Museum Film Division (hereafter IWMF) GWY509.
- 25 BAP NS 18/352. Telegram. To all *Gauleiter* and *Propagandaleiter*. From Hugo Fischer, Head of Military Staff. Berlin, 29 October 1941. File Document p. 51. Bold my own.
- 26 Transcript of the film in File BFA 6689. Also in Welch, *German Cinema, op.cit.*, p. 138.
- 27 BAP R58/184. SD Report, 20 May 1940.
- 28 BAP R56 I/34. Letter from the Vice-President of the RFK to Ucicky. 25 April 1938.

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- 29 BAP R56 I/34. Official letter to Goebbels. Sch/X. Author unknown. 21 January 1937.
- 30 Ufa publicity booklet for *Heimkehr*. 1941. BAFA 6689.
- 31 Utermann, W. 'Das Filmwerk "Heimkehr" vor Soldaten und Rüstungsarbeiten', *Völkischer Beobachter*, 24 October 1941. In Wulf, J., *Theater und Film im Dritten Reich*. (Sigbert Mohn, Gütersloh, 1964), p. 355.
- 32 Script of *Heimkehr*. BAFA 6689.
- 33 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*. No. 3243. BAFA 6689.
- 34 *Ibid*.
- 35 *Ibid*.
- 36 Film Text. BAFA 6689.
- 37 *Das Kleine Frauenblatt* Nr. 34. p. 8. In BAFA 6689.
- 38 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* No. 3243. BAFA 6689.
- 39 Dr Fritz Hippler, *Oberregierungsrat/Ministerialrat*, head of Film Abt. in RMVP.
- 40 BAP NS18/352. File Pg. 57. BAP NS18/352. File Pg. 57. Memorandum from Tießler to Hippler. Berlin, 9 October 1941. Ti/Hu. Enclosed with a copy of the original script.
- 41 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), (Band II. October–December 1941), *op.cit.*, p.171. 24 October 1941.
- 42 Figures from Sander, A.U., *op.cit.*, Tables.
- 43 A genre of film which dealt with human relationships and everyday social interactions (in a bourgeois context).
- 44 BAP NS18/352. File p. 44. *Gauleiter* East Hanover and the party Chancellery. 10 January 1942. 'Filmkritik: Film/Heimkehr'.
- 45 BAP NS18/352. File p. 51. Telegram to all *Gauleiter* and *Propagandaleiter* from Hugo Fischer, Head of Military Staff. Berlin, October 1941.
- 46 BAP NS18/352. File p. 43. From Glaser, *Gaupropagandaleiter* to Hugo Fischer, Head of Military Staff. Pm/rpk. Nr. 17001. 14 November 1941. 09:05.
- 47 BAP NS18/ 352. Documents File pp. 43, 46 and 51.
- 48 BAP NS18/352. Telegram to all *Gauleiter* and *Propagandaleiter* from Hugo Fischer, Head of Military Staff, Berlin, 29 October 1941. File p. 51.
- 49 BDC RKK 2653. Box 0016. File 24.
- 50 BAP R55/949 dated 25/9/1939. Leander RM150,000 per film appearance.
- 51 Orth, E., *Märchen Ihres Lebens. Meine Eltern – Paula Wessely und Attila Hörbiger*. (Fritz Molden, Vienna, Munich, Zürich, 1975), pp. 306–18.
- 52 Gestapo report on Wessely. BDC RKK 2705 Box 0006. File 20. 22 July 1944. Aktz IV 6 a III-B Nr. 48967/44.
- 53 *Das Kleine Volksblatt*. 16 December 1945. BDC RKK 2703. Box 0282. File 01. The ban was subsequently lifted in January 1946.

Mothers and Wives in the Feature Films of the Third Reich, 1939–1945

Motherhood

Introduction

For many years, the majority of historical works on women in the Third Reich have concentrated on their role as mothers.¹ It has been assumed that women were expected to become ‘Mothers of the Fatherland’. However, the debate surrounding women’s position in the Third Reich has altered. Gisela Bock suggested that

There is a growing body of research on women under National Socialism and the regime’s policy towards them. Its most salient common assumption is that National Socialism meant pro-natalism and brought a cult of motherhood, that it used propaganda, incentives and even force in order to have all women bear as many children as possible and to keep them out of employment for the sake of motherhood.²

Contrary to a pro-natal policy being propagated and executed in the Third Reich, Bock argued that National Socialist policy and propaganda ‘did not focus on mothers but on fathers’.³ Further to this, she argues that ‘National Socialist birth and family policy consisted not of pro-natalism and the cult of motherhood, but of anti-natalism and a cult of fatherhood and masculinity’.⁴ Adelheid von Saldern requested that the *Historikerinnenstreit* (female historian’s debate) ‘abandon the search for pure types’ altogether, and concentrate not on women’s exclusion from public life under the Nazi State, but rather their integration into it.⁵

Both Bock and von Saldern point out that the Nazi regime’s policy and propaganda did not rest solely on motherhood, as has been previously assumed. Film presented a wide array of images for and about women. Motherhood, however, was not a central theme in the films of the Third Reich. There were relatively few films which contained a central female figure purely characterised by her role as a mother. The ‘positive’ image of motherhood was often complemented by other plot developments. For example in the 1940 production, *Wunschkonzert*, the concept of motherhood was explored through depictions of the young mother

giving birth and the older mother releasing her son for war service. But the central theme of the film was the love story between Herbert Koch and Inge Wagner, with mothers being subsidiary figures. Contrary to popular assumptions of the 'perceived role' of women in the films of the Third Reich, the image actually presented was quite different. Motherhood was not chosen as a key image to be propagated and sold to the German public by the RMVP.

Certainly, the leadership placed emphasis on the concept of motherhood for the Reich in their early speeches. In the Führer's 'address to the Women of Germany' at the Reich Party Congress in Nürnberg in 1935, he stressed that, 'we regard woman as the eternal mother of our people and as her husband's companion in his life, in his work and even in his struggles'.⁶ In her speech to the party in the same year, Getrud Scholz-Klink, *Reichsfrauenführerin* (Reich Women's Leader) noted that motherhood should be the primary concern for German women. Speaking of women's schemes already in operation, Scholz-Klink boasted that, 'the Reich Maternity service intends to impress on our young and coming mothers that in marrying they consciously become the mothers of the Nation, that is to say, that they understand and share every task which the men of Germany have to face, and are the real comrades to them in every way'.⁷

Pro-natalist propaganda was being considered by Goebbels exactly one year later at the Nürnberg Reich Party Congress of 1936. In his speech, Goebbels issued his address to German women, placing particular emphasis on the production of *kinderreiche Familien* (families with a large number of children), for which his propaganda was 'particularly suited'.⁸ Propaganda for the promotion of larger families was prolific in the newspapers, in poster art, in fine art, on the radio and in party pamphlets but not to the same extent in feature films. Film began to consider the question in 1937, when a working paper on the future of the National Socialist feature film was presented to the RFK. It suggested that, 'a new film firm must . . . immediately begin production of National Socialist feature films'. Asking the question 'Which tasks should these productions confront?' the report suggested a concentration on population policies and mother and child depictions, stating that they were 'commendable areas of work'.⁹ The issue had not yet been adequately confronted in 1939 when war broke out. The commencement of hostilities placed even more pressure on women to produce such *kinderreiche Familien*.

The question of wartime population policy reached the RMVP in 1939 through a working paper submitted by the RPL, which estimated that 'only 1/6th of German families have fulfilled the necessary quota for our population policies'.¹⁰ The report suggested that propaganda concentrate on *kinderreiche Familien* in its future attempts.

This was extended to film, when, in 1939, the first feature film dealing with the question of motherhood was released. *Mutterliebe* (A Mother's Love, Gustav

Ucicky, 1939), however, was a solitary example of this theme in film, as *Filmwelt* pointed out on 22 December 1939:

It is more than surprising that there has previously never been a sound film dedicated to the German family. Can one think of a more enthralling, gripping and totally valid theme in life? Can one think of a better example in which to portray sorrow and joy? Previously, an un-German film industry has portrayed the theme of the family as a light-hearted and superficial problem . . . but perhaps previously no author and no director have had the courage to [address this issue] so close to the truth and our inner selves.¹¹

Despite this call to the film industry, even after 1939, relatively few films portrayed motherhood as a central theme. Film ideas and manuscripts were received by the RMVP on this subject in 1941 and yet none were produced. The RPA of Halle submitted a film synopsis for production:

This film will show, how a healthy, considerate woman makes every sacrifice to give a child to the people. In this case, she does it without a happy, shining example of marriage. I have written this film because . . . the danger still exists that during and, above all, after the war, the selfish employment of women will be strengthened even more.¹²

The desire and the manuscripts were in place and yet films portraying *kinderreiche Familien* were still not produced. By 1942, this caused a furore in the Reich Chancellery, who demanded the production of feature films with this theme. On 24 June 1942, Tießler contacted Dr Fritz Hippler, passing on a copy of a report from the *Gauleitung* in Brandenburg, which had caused considerable distress to the Reich Chancellery. For the first time, the report linked the production of the feature film directly to the military policy pursued in the course of the War, in particular in the East, with population policy in the Reich:

Recently, the wish to see the German family and in particular larger families portrayed in feature films has been repeatedly voiced to me from different strata of the German people. Almost always, one only sees films in which . . . a childless marriage is portrayed. The public has not enjoyed previous films; the propaganda value has been outweighed by the financial gain, both author and director of the 'population political film' must carry more money. The [image] of a healthy . . . , happy German family should be more frequently demonstrated. The enormous [living] space [question] in the East . . . can only be solved when the German population totals rise. There, the Slavic race . . . have a higher birth rate. The writing and film divisions must be placed in the service of population propaganda. This task can not only be solved through culture films, but particularly through the subconscious effect of the feature film.¹³

The Party Chancellery became involved with the problems presented to them by the *Gauleiter* of Brandenburg, contacting Tießler in early 1943 as to future RMVP

plans to produce films which depicted large families through the medium of the feature film. On 24 February 1943, Tießler informed Hippler that

The Party Chancellery has now taken up this question again. The problem of the promotion of large families, which becomes ever more important due to the war, as evident in the birth rate, steps more and more into the foreground and with all means possible, must be checked with the necessary measures of Total War. The Party Chancellery asks for the following concrete information:

- (1) What feature films are already in existence, in which the theme of large families are dealt with in an exemplary way?
- (2) For this purpose, which [future] films are in production?

In connection with this, the Party Chancellery stressed once again their wish that large families are portrayed in an exemplary way in more feature films.¹⁴

The Party Chancellery forced the issue to the fore. Tießler mournfully confirmed on 24 May 1943 that, 'since 1939, and also in previous times, no feature film was released, which dealt with the theme of large families in . . . the appropriate way. It is not yet known whether films of this sort are in preparation or whether such film synopses have been planned.'¹⁵

Hence, by their own admission, from 1939 to 1943, the key years of the War, no films had been produced in which the subject of large families and population policy had been addressed, nor were there plans for the production of such a film in the future. This is somewhat surprising given that motherhood was a key image targeting women in various other propaganda media of the Third Reich. Why the Ministry failed to propagate the image of motherhood in the feature film is a matter for conjecture. Their first attempt in 1939, *Mutterliebe*, whilst proclaimed a success by the RMVP, was badly received by the German public. Melancholic images were not popular in wartime, when juxtaposed with high drama, romance, musical and fantasy films, so crucial for essential escapism for the wartime audience. As a result, the production of such films became less financially viable, as the report of the *Gauleiter* of Brandenburg hinted in 1942, making it a less popular theme for directors, authors and stars alike. Motherhood was a subsidiary image for women in the feature films of the Third Reich. Mothers were integrated into the plot, rather than motherhood being the main characteristic of the female protagonists. Alternatively, mothers were given smaller parts, as in the 1937 production *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort* (Leave on Word of Honour, Karl Ritter, 1937) or *Wunschkonzert* (1940), where mothers were reduced to a mere scene or even one image in some cases. Rather, emphasis was placed on the negative image of motherhood as a predominant theme, as will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters. Women were indeed biologically, sexually and most importantly, racially determined. It was more important for the films of the Third Reich to show the perils of blood sin,

racial pollution and genetic inheritance. It seems that the negative image of women was deemed to be more powerful than the positive one.

Mutterliebe (A Mother's Love, Gustav Ucicky, 1939)

This section intends to compare the image offered in *Mutterliebe* in 1939 with another film released two years later in 1941, *Annelie*. The characters of Marthe Pirlinger and Annelie Laborius follow identical life patterns. It will be demonstrated that a clear image of the heroic, gentle, selfless and most importantly, sacrificial mother was fostered in the few films depicting motherhood.

The first film, *Mutterliebe* was released in 1939, in effect creating its own genre of film, centred around the concept of motherhood. The film tells the story of the Pirlinger family: Marthe, the mother, and her four children, Franzi, Walter, Paul and Felix. Widowed at an early age, Marthe was faced with raising her four children alone. In order to generate sufficient finances, she sets up a laundry and works hard to keep her family afloat, one of the many sacrifices Marthe makes for her children. She also takes in a lodger, Dr Koblmüller, who later proposes to Marthe but is denied. The money she earns provides for her children. Franzi is able to go to dance school, Walter to a music conservatoire and the other two boys to school. The children are a constant source of worry to their mother. Paul, in particular, causes considerable distress. After having problems at school, he decides to show his bravery by playing on the railway lines and is consequently trapped under two passing trains. Felix has to inform his distraught mother that Paul is being treated by the police and fire service on the railway track. Ten years later, the children are still causing problems for their long-suffering mother. Rosl, a young employee of the laundry, becomes pregnant by Felix. Walter is leading a dissolute life as a young musician, dating a married woman and staying out late. Franzi, now a dancer, is having a love affair with a singer, which is soon proved to be a mistake, and Paul is forced to abandon his study to become a doctor because he is blind. Paul must undergo an operation. As a final sacrifice, Marthe donates her cornea to restore Paul's eyesight. Marthe issues Felix with an ultimatum: Marry Rosl or leave the house. Felix marries Rosl at his mother's request. On Marthe's sixtieth birthday, the family salute her life. Felix and Rosl have a family. Paul is married and has finally become a doctor. Marthe accepts Walter back into her life. The film ends with Dr Koblmüller's speech and a rendition of the family song, bringing the audience back to the opening scenes of the film.¹⁶

Dr Koblmüller's birthday speech in the film is indicative of the portrait of Marthe Pirlinger, representative of German motherhood:

And when I myself look over this table and see you sitting over there with white hair, then I know that there are no words to describe what lies between happiness and

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unhappiness, joy and worry, sacrifices and helpfulness, love and kindness. I only know one solitary word which can explain everything, that word by which your children call you. 'Mother' . . . We want to thank our birthday child. Nothing else. Just thank her . . . How great and wonderful, how full of love the human heart can be.

Throughout the film, Marthe Pirlinger (played by Käthe Dorsch) is the epitome of the sacrificial mother. Her own life is subservient to that of her children. She declines Koblmüller's offer of marriage, so that her own life is dedicated solely to her children. She works long and gruelling hours in the laundry to provide for their needs. They do not repay her love or sacrifices with good behaviour. Frau Pirlinger is presented with an array of problems by her children and yet, despite their disobedience, Marthe is loyal to them, supporting them when it is needed and being firm when a decision should be made. The primary image of Marthe Pirlinger, like so many other female figures in the films of the Third Reich, is sacrificial: she remains alone throughout the film, she waits up for her children, she works hard to give them everything they want in life and she even gives Paul a cornea to restore his eyesight.

Marthe Pirlinger asserts her importance as a mother throughout the film. She tells Dr Koblmüller that 'Children never grow up. They always need their mother.' Later, she informs Rosl that 'the mother is valuable to the whole world and to the skies and the stars as well'. This last sentiment is the key theme of the 1939 film: to demonstrate to the public the crucial role each mother plays to the nation, in her everyday struggles and sacrifices for her children.

The image of the mother in the films of the Third Reich was characterised by her qualities and worth to the nation. Like other films in the genre, *Mutterliebe* sought to stress the qualities of the mother: bravery, heroism, love and above all, sacrifice. The central figure in the film is praised for her 'unending patience, gentle faith and brave sacrifices'.¹⁷ These are the core characteristics of the mother. Three essential elements of motherhood are explored in Ucicky's production: the love of the mother, the sacrifice she makes and her lifelong commitment to her children. Firstly, the mother is presented as having formed a bond with her children at birth, which instils a natural, maternal instinct in her. This was exploited in *Mutterliebe*, as *Filmwelt* reported on 22 December 1939, 'only the hand of the mother . . . , with its soft, untiring power, or with a melancholic, but nevertheless, faithful smile, ties the strands together again, binding feelings and thoughts'.¹⁸ Her gentle love is converted to worry on occasions, when her children are in danger. Her fears are presented on a short-term basis, for example when Paul is trapped on the railway lines and after a subsequent accident is blinded, to a more long-term concern for the future of her children. *Filmwelt* continued: 'In her eyes, secretly burn these questions again and again: Will these children . . . take pride in their name and their family? Will they remain as steadfast as their mother had hoped?'¹⁹ The love

of a mother, therefore, is presented as a melancholic one, lamenting mistakes and fearing for the future.

The life of the mother is bound to her children by the second element in her portrayal: sacrifice. The most obvious sacrifice made by Marthe in the film is her decision to work after the death of her husband. The film demonstrates the hard and laborious nature of her task at the laundry in order to give her children the correct education and to fulfil their every desire. The physical expression of Marthe's sacrifice is manifested in her donation of her cornea to save the sight of her son. The message of sacrifice in the film is clear. On 22 December 1939, *Filmwelt* noted that the essential characteristic of Marthe Pirlinger was that 'she bore sacrifice after sacrifice', and 'pursued the development of her children with care and an ever watchful love.'²⁰ The sacrifices of the mother, when compared to those of the soldier or figure in public life, are perceived to be small ones, confined to the domestic and 'private' sphere. The film argues that these daily sacrifices on the part of the individual mother are perhaps the greatest. Helmut Holscher reported in *Filmwelt* that 'they are small sacrifices, the difficulties of everyday life'.²¹ The selfless nature of the mother's sacrifice is also stressed, creating a martyr of the female protagonist: 'she does everything without many words, without even thinking. She does it because she is a mother. Nothing unique, just a mother, that surrounds everyone, all self-denial, all pain, but also every joy, the small as well as the great that each mother carries her whole life long.'²²

This sacrifice is to be a lifelong one for the mother. This is emphasised by Ucicky, who portrays the life of the mother from the birth of her children until her sixtieth birthday, ensuring that 'she has first borne the child and will bear those same lives right up until the end'.²³ The distinction is made between the duties and responsibilities of the young and the old mother. *Filmwelt* commented on 14 July 1939 that 'the young mother fights tenaciously for the happiness of her children and the aged mother, in her wisdom, is able to give strength and inner "richness" to her grown up children'.²⁴ As demonstrated in the film, these children need their mother for their whole lives, not purely in their formative years. The mother is the central element to their lives from the time they were born until their own death. The fact that 'young people's hearts need their mother',²⁵ at all times is one of the definitive characteristics of the portrait of both the mother and her offspring.

As stressed by the RMVP, importance was placed on the promotion of *kinderreiche Familien*. Marthe, with her four children, three of whom were boys, would have been the recipient of a bronze motherhood medal. *Filmwelt* proclaimed: 'a healthy family has many members'.²⁶ In concentrating heavily on the family, the onus is taken from the mother figure and placed on the family as a unit. Rolf Marben, author of the 22 December 1939 article in *Filmwelt*, continued, 'the theme of this film is to examine once more . . . the problem of a mother's love, but, moreover, the destiny of the entire family'.²⁷ In a previous article in *Filmwoche*

on 12 July 1939, it was asserted that ‘the family, with its five members, is the hero of the film’.²⁸ The mother herself is at the epicentre of the familial unit, as, ‘the eternal influence on family life’, bestowing on it ‘her clever and gentle guidance’.²⁹ Just as the family is eternal, future generations are needed for its sustenance. The film ends with a family gathering for Marthe’s birthday, surrounding her with her children, their spouses and most importantly, her grandchildren, ensuring the continuance of her bloodline after her death. The film emphasised that the mother realises that ‘at some time, all daughters and daughters-in-law will go the same way as me. They too will fear for their family and suffer to maintain its unity.’³⁰ The eternal circle of family life is established.

Ucicky wanted to emphasise that the film was ‘a true to life story’,³¹ pointing out that the film was to relate to the lives of women in the Reich. Helmut Holscher, in his article *Menschen wie du und ich* (People like you and I), noted in *Filmwelt* on 24 November 1939

The film Mutterliebe is not a dramatic . . . or particular case. Behind it stands, from this portrayal of mother’s lives, the current and the eternal. What this film will show us is more than just one fate. It is all our fates . . . A film? A literary work? Both. This Wien film for Ufa receives the prädiat ‘Künstlerisch besonders wertvoll’ . . . Mutterliebe should be a song from the heart of the mother.³²

It was also intended as both a means to encourage women to produce more children and as a monument to those who have already performed their maternal duties for the State. The film emphasised the importance of motherhood to the Reich. In its review of the film on 12 January 1940, *Filmwelt* reported that ‘we want to be and should be proud of this work of German cinematic art, which is the most human, beautiful and deeply distressing [production] of the year 1939. It is a present to millions of German mothers and millions of their children.’³³ The crucial message of the film was confirmed in an earlier edition of the magazine, which stated, on 14 July 1939 that ‘to us Germans, the word mother is a term which we are inclined to respect . . . the mother is the quintessence of our being, our existence and our future’.³⁴

The praise for the film in the reviews was reflected in Goebbels’ diaries. On first viewing the film, in October 1939, he commented that it was, ‘a gripping work of art, [with] a noble and honourable theme, well acted and in no instance overdone. I am happy about this great success.’³⁵ Two months later, on 27 December, he confirmed that the film was ‘a true masterwork’, awarding it the, ‘highest prädiat’.³⁶ Goebbels’ final comment appears to have overestimated the film’s public success. Whilst Sander’s thesis reported that the film received sixty-five positive responses, making it the twenty-fourth most popular film among the young audience,³⁷ the SD report of 19 February 1940 told of a very different reaction to

the one assumed by the Reich Minister. The report detailed that the film was 'much discussed' in a wide section of society, and among some positive reactions to the film, 'voices of dissent' could be found. The SD report noted that 'the family portrayed in the film is in no sense an example of normal family life, especially a family . . . with such very difficult children, which was obviously constructed in this manner for dramatic considerations'. Various sectors of the public objected to the film on a number of grounds. The general public demanded that Marthe should have taken 'strict methods of upbringing with such children'. The BDM protested against the portrayal of the 'fate of the German mother, weighed down by such a tragic melancholy' whilst the hard-core National Socialists protested that the film did not concentrate on the linked issue of 'racial awareness'.³⁸ Rural reports in 1942 also confirmed that Ucicky's film was not popular in rural environs.³⁹ Despite this criticism of Ucicky's 1939 production, the film was still held to be one of the propagandistic masterworks of the war years. In a response to suggestions for further productions in the RFK, Alberti, the RFI, wrote:

I will only give a short answer to your letter. Your observations pleased me very much. I am convinced that in the future you will still find such artistic satisfaction in film, that you have found in former years. A lot of outstandingly good films will be shown which, in my opinion, still surpass *Friedmann Bach*. The films *Mutterliebe*, *Der Postmeister*, *Ohm Krüger* and *Jud Süß* are already well known to you. New films coming out now are *Heimat* and *Annelie*.⁴⁰

Annelie, Die Geschichte eines Lebens
(*Annelie, the Story of a Life, Josef von Baky, 1941*)

The final film mentioned by Alberti in this letter was also to be a monument to motherhood. *Annelie, Die Geschichte eines Lebens* was directed in 1941 by Josef von Baky and starred Luise Ullrich in the title role. The film tackled the joint subjects of war and motherhood, bridging and combining two world wars, and, like *Mutterliebe*, providing a trans-generational outlook on the theme of motherhood. *Annelie* represents the true sacrifice of a mother, developed over the course of two conflicts, and, in this sense, was the most idealistic representation of the war-woman and mother. The *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* is quoted here in full, as it not only gives a plot synopsis, but also gives an indication of the role of the sacrificial mother in the film:

A forgiving field post letter from the World War. In this dark hour, a farewell to a wife, a cherished comrade, written to a wonderful mother. Her life, which was full of strength, humility and sacrifice passes before us. A quarter of an hour on New Years Eve night 1871 . . . Dörensens, with delighted pride, had become a father. *Annelie* had finally arrived.

His child. Herr Dörsen felt like a little king and had to forgive the lovely, small human being for not coming at midnight, as he had hoped, but a whole quarter of an hour late to the world. However, Annelie remained faithful to this quarter of an hour tardiness, which caused joy and grief. That time that changed the world never penetrated Annelie's blissful childhood. [She knew] nothing of the later struggle of duty and calling . . . From the dancing lessons to the first date to the first ball. And then destiny led her to the man who saved her life and to whom she gave her heart . . . Dr Martin Laborius. Annelie became a happy, young wife, a tender spouse and a proud mother. The years went by . . . and the children grew up. Annelie blossomed and became more beautiful and strong. The old Dörsen, the father once radiant with happiness, now became a more loving and doting grandfather. 1914 – A fateful year for Germany, which also became a fateful year for Annelie. Martin, her darling husband, went as a doctor to the troops in the field. Annelie's sons Reinhold, Gerhard and the last one, the 17 year old Rudi, donned the grey tunic. Annelie herself became chief of the Red Cross service. And then came a night which Annelie would not forget. Through the storm and the rain, she fought through enemy territory to the field hospital, in which her husband lay. Martin, her love and comrade for many beautiful and fulfilling years. They had to leave each other. Martin's [final] letter remained Annelie's most sacred bequest. 1941 – Annelie has turned 70. With cheerful melancholy, but also with pride in her rewarding work, she surveys her life. Everyone came to visit – the wives of her sons, the children, the grandsons, even her loyal childhood friend, George – all came to congratulate her. Even her eldest, Reinhold, congratulated her. He was passing through Berlin, as a captain in the service of the country, and he even managed to phone her. That was the most beautiful birthday present. And now the grandmother Annelie would like to ponder and dream a little bit. She sits in a warm, comfortable chair, adjusts the cushion, which bears the inscription, 'just a quarter of an hour.' Annelie falls asleep. Quietly cheerfully and peacefully, she entrusts herself to another place, after a life which was rich and beautiful, because it was so full of love and sacrifice.⁴¹

The above synopsis sees Annelie embrace four roles: as a mother, wife, daughter and nurse. All four roles are dependent upon and revolve around men. Annelie is seen as the ultimate symbol for the war-woman, as her duties fall within her traditional sphere of influence.

As a mother, Annelie embarks upon a three-stage journey. Firstly, she is a new mother, glowing after the birth of her children and raising them in an acceptable way. The mantle of motherhood has passed from Annelie's mother to Annelie herself. A newly-wed, she becomes the mother of a baby boy. Just as her father had awaited the birth of his daughter, he now awaits the birth of his first grandchild. A further generation is added to the family and life continues. Annelie makes a good mother in the initial years of her boys' lives. In the first scenes depicting her motherhood, she sings the two eldest a lullaby, whilst nursing the baby. Reinhold, the eldest son, plays the piano. As in *Mutterliebe*, the years fly by and a young man now sits at the piano, graduating from Schubert to Liszt. Their father returns

home and Reinhold confirms that his true love is his music. His mother supports him in his ambition. As the boys grow up, their mother is still the key influence in their lives. Reinhold, now dressed in the grey tunic of a soldier, is still playing the piano. The boys join their father and go off to the front lines in the First World War. As a mother, Annelie is supportive, holds their hands and glows with pride. Military music from the streets drowns out Reinhold's piano playing and the time for departure and separation is upon the family. Annelie is left alone with her father. Her sons go off to war. Annelie has released her sons for the Fatherland. This second stage of motherhood was emphasised by Getrud Scholz-Klink in a radio broadcast on 21 May 1944, in which she stated,

Just as they bore their own suffering for Germany in the past, so they give their sons for the new Europe which is taking shape. But incomparably harder than their own pains in labour is their task today. For then, tangible life ended all pains, whilst today the mother stands at the end with empty hands, and must be satisfied with the knowledge that the life of her people is more than that of individuals. It is the greatest sacrifice a mother can make and it is not only made when the news comes that the son to whom she gave birth has been killed. She actually dedicated him at the moment he faced her for the first time in his field-grey tunic. She deliberately handed over to the people what, until then, she had considered her own. For days, weeks, months, perhaps years, she did her job with all her strength, an upright and courageous woman, at home with her other children, or at her place of work, and in hard nights of bombing as well. In her subconscious mind, however, the anxiety about the one at the front continued ceaselessly; the feeling that any hour might separate him from her forever. Thus the moment when the news is broken that this sacrifice, which she has already experienced many times over has now become irrevocable, is for her the ending of an inner state of readiness which has been with her from the very beginning and from which, subsequently, the bravest and firmest pillars of our people will arise.⁴²

Annelie appears as an older mother, who is forced to release her husband and sons off to war. One of the final joys of her life is that she has raised three nationally conscious sons, who are willing to go and fight for their Fatherland. At first Annelie finds the separation difficult, but her fears are soon allayed by her father, Herr Dörsen:

Annelie: I cannot be without Reinhold. When will this war be over? Why do people have to separate; people who love each other as much as we do? I simply cannot endure it.

Dörsen: Believe me, one endures it! The endurance of solitude is not only done once. You too have sacrificed in this war. And you must . . . take care of your husband at the front. It is important for him, that in each field post parcel he receives, he finds a letter from your cheerful heart.

After these comforting words, Annelie's resolve is strengthened and she endures the hardships that the 1914–18 conflict has to offer her, such as the death of her husband. Once again, we encounter the female as a grieving mother, as a solitary figure, accepting with courage the separation of the family unit for the Fatherland. Annelie accepts the death of her husband in war. She battles through enemy territory, risking her own life in order to be with Martin in the final moments of his. They have but five seconds together, but this is enough to say their final farewells. He has managed to dictate a letter to Annelie, which becomes her most treasured possession for the rest of her life. The letter read:

My darling Annelie,

I don't know whether I will see you one last time. But I must thank you once again. Back then, when your life hung on only a quarter of an hour, I already knew that I could no longer manage without you. How rich you have made me, my Annelie, I now know for the first time that I will never again get a quarter of an hour with you, to thank you for a life full of happiness. Naturally, it is . . . in your eyes that we were happy with each other and had children together and worked together. But where does great love and great happiness lay, if it is not natural? You gave up your time and your life to give other people comfort and have become an example to them. For me, you were simply the fulfilment of my life, for which I want to thank you in this hour. Ah, Annelie, for the first time, in these last hours, we know how thankful we must be for the gift of love.⁴³

He dies in her arms. The last words of Martin's letter direct the course of Annelie's remaining years: 'The pain is far outweighed by the joy. You have to be strong.' On leaving the hospital, she lights a cigarette for another soldier. In her hour of sadness, she shows kindness to others. Her duty as a nurse in the care of other soldiers overrides her feelings of personal and individual sadness. Annelie remains true to Martin for the rest of her life, demonstrating the ultimate expression of the love of a war-widow. By the third stage of her journey as a maternal figure, now as a grandmother, she has accepted the departure of her sons, Reinhold, Gerhard and Rudi, who are now fighting in the second conflict of the century. Reinhold rings his mother on her seventieth birthday from the train transporting him to the front. Annelie is surrounded by her daughters-in-law and all her grandchildren. The mantle is passed from Annelie to her sons and their families. The wives of Reinhold, Gerhard and Rudi now have to face the separation Annelie had to endure in the formative years of her life. When Annelie herself dies, assuming the body of a younger woman, she rises to greet Martin, who is dressed in his military uniform. In death, they are finally reunited.

The life of Annelie follows the pattern of the war-wife and mother: the mother who has completed the full circle of maternal duty (from pregnancy to the release of her sons to becoming a grandmother), the dutiful and loyal wife, who waits to

be reunited with her husband in death, the loving daughter, who dotes on her father, always listening to his advice and respecting him and as a nurse, caring for the sick and injured, refusing to wallow in her own pain, grief and solitude. Two faces of motherhood are presented in *Annelie*. As a young mother, Annelie is the head of a large family, comprising of three sons, to whom she is supportive. She places great importance on their education and as a wife, is part of a complete marital unit. As an older mother, she finds that she is widowed, but continues to be a wise and supportive single mother. She has released her sons for war service for the Fatherland and at the end of the film has left her legacy through the many grandchildren that surround her on her seventieth birthday. Like Marthe Pirlinger, Annelie became a symbol of the German woman. The Ufa publicity booklet enthused that *Annelie* was,

the story of a woman, who remained faithful to herself and . . . who managed, loved and fought . . . to the end, which only the heart of a wife and a mother can feel and endure. The young wife and mother charms us completely. For in her rejuvenating power, mankind's holy and enduring [nature] is embodied – heroic, motherly love; the wisdom and mercy of a strong heart. With this great Ufa film, the German wife and mother is owed a debt of gratitude and a beautiful monument is erected to the . . . sacrificial and devotional love of a German mother.⁴⁴

The popular success of the film *Annelie* is reflected in both the box office figures and the RMVP's use of the film at a later date. The film, which cost RM 1,492,000 to produce, grossed RM 6,000,000, making an estimated profit of RM 4,508,000, from 1 June 1943 to 31 January 1944.⁴⁵ The RPL rural surveys report that *Annelie* was among the most popular with audiences,⁴⁶ and the *Gaugeschäftsführer of Danzig-Westpreußen*, Preuß, stated that, '*Annelie* belongs with the best German films of all time.'⁴⁷ The RMVP distributed 180 copies of the film across the Reich.⁴⁸ *Annelie* was popular in rural areas, not just evidenced by the RPL reports, but also in a declaration from the *Gau* East Prussia sent to the RPL on 21 November 1942, which stated that, 'Luise Ullrich and K.L. Diehl in the film *Annelie*, had a very good response. The story of a woman's life that stretched from the year 1870 to our times. From the beginning to the end, this film found full sympathy from the rural population.'⁴⁹ Sander's thesis placed the film seventeenth most popular in her youth survey.⁵⁰ However, the most convincing evidence is provided by the decision of the RFK to re-release the film in 1944 which was taken following demands from the *Volksturm* 'to increase the employment of German National Films'. The minute selecting the films was sent on 15 November 1944 to Goebbels from the *Reichsfilmintendant* noting that 'for this reason the Film division has given instructions to the German film-marketing companies to reissue valuable German film at short notice. Enclosed is the following selection that I may submit to the Reich Minister,'⁵¹ among which was *Annelie*.⁵² This occurred on 24 November

and *Annelie* was selected for re-release. It ran for seven days in Berlin, Posen and Hamburg, receiving 15,188, 14,212 and 7,902 visitors respectively.⁵³ The demand for the re-release of these 'nationally significant' films illustrates one of two possibilities. Firstly, the low level of production in 1944 may have prompted the *Volksturm* to demand a 'fuller' film programme. Or secondly, given the demand for a particular genre of film, the flagging territorial army needed to feel a sense of hope and a lift in morale. The medium they chose was significant: film. The strongly voiced demand for 'rejuvenating' films and the speed with which the RFK responded (the first demand being noted on 11 November 1944 and the final selection of the films and first re-release on the 24 November 1944) points to the importance placed on film as a means of propaganda in wartime by the army, the public and the authorities themselves.

Annelie, therefore, seems to have had more success, in terms of box office receipts and public and State responses, than *Mutterliebe*. Yet the essence of both films is motherhood. Both films portray very similar plots and themes. Both Marthe and Annelie were or became in the course of the film, single mothers, forced to cope with raising their children alone, after the death of a spouse. Both are mothers of larger families, primarily consisting of boys (Marthe Pirlinger had three boys, and one girl, whilst Annelie had three boys). Both films offer a similar portrait of the mother: she is loving, gentle and yet concerned for the future of her children, she is willing to sacrifice anything for them, even her own happiness and, when circumstance dictates, her own health. She regards her task as a mother as an heroic one, and yet takes little praise for her role in their upbringing. In short, the mother appears as a martyr. The children themselves are dependent on their mother, from their infancy to adulthood, emphasising that the mother is the crucial element of the family. One of the children (Reinhold in *Annelie* and Walter in *Mutterliebe*) is dedicated to the arts. The conclusion to both films is also similar. Both films end with a portrait of the elderly mother, both films ending on a birthday scene, a scene in which the life of the mother is appraised and celebrated. Both Marthe and Annelie are surrounded by their grandchildren, who become their legacy and ensure the continuation of their genes. Most importantly, both Marthe and Annelie are presented as a monument to the Reich and to the concept of motherhood, encouraging the women of the Reich to become mothers and convincing those who already were that their task was an honourable one. Given the similarities between *Mutterliebe* and *Annelie*, it is surprising that each film received such different reactions. Only one theme separated the two films: war. The female audience could perhaps identify with Annelie's plight in the midst of two World Wars, in which she loses her husband, and is forced to release her three sons into the hands of the State. *Mutterliebe*, released in December 1939 at a time when the War rarely touched the home front, received a poor response. *Annelie*, with its portrait of the war mother, seemed to be a more popular, and realistic, choice for

the Reich audiences in 1941, the year of its release, a year which saw the invasion of the USSR and the first faltering of the *Blitzkrieg*.

Wives in the Films of the Third Reich ***Immensee* (Veit Harlan, 1943)**

War dictated the popularity of film productions in the Third Reich, in the themes it commissioned and in the responses it provoked. One of the most important cinematic contributions to front-line morale was Veit Harlan's 1943 production, *Immensee*, starring Kristina Söderbaum, Carl Raddatz and Paul Klinger. The film told the story of Elisabeth, a country girl, who falls in love with Reinhardt. They spend an idyllic youth together by the lake, swimming, talking and enjoying the country life. Reinhardt decides to pursue his musical career in Hamburg, where he is studying at a world-famous conservatoire, leaving Elisabeth at home. Reinhardt wants to travel the world and experience new and exciting adventures. Elisabeth, however, wants to remain at Immensee, her home. Reinhardt enjoys his time at the conservatoire, and spends his time composing 'Twelve Songs of Elisabeth'. When he returns home, they sing them together. They are united again, but Reinhardt must return to Hamburg to complete his studies. Elisabeth resolves to wait for him, but fears that he may not return. She decides to visit Reinhardt on the day of his final exam and enters his room, only to find a woman in his bed. She leaves Hamburg broken hearted and decides to marry the son and heir of the recently deceased owner of the estate of Immensee, Erich. Reinhardt learns of this and, realising his loss, heads for Rome, where he has been offered a scholarship. He meets Loretta there but realises that his heart belongs to Elisabeth. He returns to Immensee to win her back. Elisabeth is tempted by Reinhardt's offer and Erich tells Elisabeth that she is free to leave him for Reinhardt if she so desires. Erich confides in Elisabeth that he only wants her happiness. This confession prompts Elisabeth to realise the true meaning of love and she decides to stay faithful to Erich. Reinhardt leaves Immensee, having been rejected by Elisabeth, and pursues a fruitful career as a composer and conductor, travelling the world, whilst Elisabeth remains at Immensee with Erich. The couple meet again many years later after a performance of Reinhardt's latest composition, *Seerosen* (Water Lilies), inspired by their flower, symbolising their love. Reinhardt asks the ageing Elisabeth to join him. Once again, Elisabeth refuses, staying loyal to her husband, Erich, even after his death.

Elisabeth's loyalty, during their marriage and after Erich's death, became the defining point of the film and the inspiration for many front-line soldiers, crucial to the cinematic wartime propaganda campaign. Kristina Söderbaum, the actress who played Elisabeth in the film, received many letters from the front lines concerning Elisabeth. She recalled the effect of *Immensee* in a television interview

in 1993, stating, 'There were letters, wonderful letters. The soldiers were homesick at the front. And the girl I played was an ideal for them. She loved her husband and was faithful to him. I still get letters today.'⁵⁴ This reaction to the 1943 production was also confirmed in Söderbaum's memoirs, in which she noted,

Immensee . . . was a film for men. After the premiere in December 1943, I received thousands of soldiers' letters, many of which were written through tears. Why? Because for four years, the war had raged. Soldiers fought in Russia, Africa, Italy, lying in trenches, thinking of home . . . Their wives were at home, whom they missed. The bride who waited, like Elisabeth in Immensee. Her young love broke up. She married the local estate owner, the lord of Immensee. The boyfriend of her youth came back to woo her again. But Elisabeth decided to stay with her husband. Even when he died, she stayed faithful to him and his work. The highest monument to love.⁵⁵

One young soldier, Klaus Jebens, was so captivated by the film that, in 1975, he bought the estate where *Immensee* was filmed. He still lives there today. He told Söderbaum that 'I was simply captivated. The film underpinned my ideals.'⁵⁶ Söderbaum became the symbol of the young Aryan girl and wife in films of the Reich. Söderbaum claims that she did not realise her importance until later, stating in an interview, housed in the Imperial War Museum, that,

I didn't know that . . . I only know that I had a big success . . . I didn't know that I should be symbolic of a German girl. I didn't know that. I only know that they liked blonde girls. The role I really played in German film, if I really say the truth, and I would like to say the truth, I really first know after the war, because people tell me, 'Oh you have been a symbol for us' and so many people I met . . . begin to cry and [I] wondered why do you cry? Because my films were so sad or what? I could not understand why so many of them have tears in their eyes. Maybe they remember when they were young.⁵⁷

It was this identification with the audience which brought great success for the film in 1943. With so many men away on the front lines, it was comforting to see the ultimate symbol of Aryan womanhood in such a role, staying faithful to her husband, even after his eventual death.

The image of the loyal woman and perfect companion is explored in Harlan's 1943 production. The film opens with the two young lovers meeting once again after many years of separation. The ageing Elisabeth attends a concert conducted and composed by her former love, Reinhardt. After the performance, Elisabeth meets Reinhardt at his hotel for tea. She notices that the table is decorated with *Seerosen* (Water Lilies). Söderbaum recalls that 'the water lily was the symbol of our love'.⁵⁸ Their first meeting hints at a previous love affair and affection which never faded over the years;

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- Reinhardt: Elisabeth.
- Elisabeth: Reinhardt. This meeting will go quickly!
- Reinhardt: It must go quickly. I must be on the plane in an hour... it's been a long time since I saw you.
- Elisabeth: Thank you for the water lilies, Reinhardt.
- Reinhardt: Ah, the water lilies, Elisabeth.
- Elisabeth: I thought that it [the concert] was for me alone, not for all of those strange people.
- Reinhardt: The water lilies. Yes. What would the water lilies be without you, Elisabeth? A memory born of our youth.
- Elisabeth: I haven't been there since Erich's death. [She gives back an old photo of herself to him]
- Reinhardt: Good God! How long ago was that? How many thousand years? And now, in a fleeting hour between a hotel dining room and an aeroplane, it's all coming back to me again.

Through the photograph, the couple are transported back in time to Immensee. Reinhardt has given Elisabeth a bird as a gift, which she treasures. The couple sit on a bench Reinhardt himself has made and begin to make plans for the future. The conversation hints that Reinhardt and Elisabeth's characters are very different, with Elisabeth wanting to stay at Immensee, whilst Reinhardt dreams of travelling the world:

- Reinhardt: Look over there. The sun. I want to be over there, where the sun sets.
- Elisabeth: And when you are over there? Where the sun goes down. You'll go further and further, saying over again, 'I want to be over there, where the sun sets.' And you'll forever be going further and further.
- Reinhardt: Do you think that I can sit here for my whole life? That's not for me. That's something for Erich perhaps. But not for me. Away, I must get out. I must get out into the world. Other countries, other people. Always something new.

Reinhardt longs for the wider world. Elisabeth desires to stay at Immensee, completing her picture as the idealistic and loyal companion, who loves her homeland. The *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* notes that Elisabeth 'stays at home, deeply rooted and always strong in the homely countryside, which her whole heart is attached to',⁵⁹ whilst 'music and the world' pulls Reinhardt further away. This is reflected in Elisabeth and Reinhardt's parents. In a discussion, Reinhardt's father admits, 'A modern man. That's me!' whilst Elisabeth's mother longs for 'the good

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old days'. The conversation turns to Reinhardt's imminent departure, where the differences between the couple are highlighted by Elisabeth's mother:

- Elisabeth: Reinhardt is going to China or Honolulu or wherever he's going!
- Reinhardt's father: See Reinhardt. She's wrong!
- Elisabeth's mother: Elisabeth, everyone is not the same as the next. One stays in the homeland and the other goes out into the wide world.

The couple enjoy their last moments together, swimming in the lake. Reinhardt plays around and pretends to drown, whilst Elisabeth is left to panic. She screams at him when he comes to the surface, 'it is totally beastly when you are away for such a long time', a comment intended for his departure to Hamburg rather than his submersion antics. He risks drowning once again, when he foolishly attempts to gather Elisabeth's favourite flower from the marsh: water lilies. Erich is left alone to observe the couple. His father encourages him to join in, but Erich recognises that the couple want to be left alone. Erich's father is seriously ill and informs his son that he must take care of the estate on his death, his final words in the film serving as his testament to his son:

- Father: You must be proud. My life will not continue for much longer and I must leave everything . . . and then you will be lord of the estate, of the estate house of Immensee. You must be proud, Erich.
- Erich: But father, you mustn't talk of dying. It is not so near.
- Father: Yes, unfortunately it is. I don't want to leave this beautiful earth at all. That is true. People get ever more old, their legs ever more cold, and then death is the conclusion to life. The young can die, but the old must.

Reinhardt meanwhile prepares for his departure, and his new life, telling Elisabeth, 'don't be angry. We don't have time. Tomorrow, I'll be in Hamburg, at the Conservatoire. Tomorrow, life begins.' Elisabeth recognises Reinhardt's new life, but comments, 'tomorrow, life begins. Without me.' Elisabeth's melancholy continues as Reinhardt's train leaves and her only reminder of him is the bird he gave her. Her mother attempts to comfort the heartbroken Elisabeth, demonstrating that a child always needs their mother, whose gentle wisdom and advice helps them through difficult times:

- Elisabeth's mother: I already know what's wrong with you. But believe me, it is good that he has gone. You'll see that you should not get attached so early in life. You don't know anything of

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the world. Or from life and perhaps if you wait, you'll get something better.

Elisabeth: I don't want anything better! Nothing in the world is better than Reinhardt!

Elisabeth's mother: Yes. [Laughing] You'll always think that! But believe your mother!

Reinhardt finds that life in the city is hectic. Friends sing his composition to him on his birthday, whilst Elisabeth sends him a cake she baked in the shape of a water lily. He does not return home on his birthday, as he promised. Symbolically, the bird dies and Elisabeth buries him under the bench on which they sat and discussed the future. As she buries the bird, she prophetically comments, 'our great love – a small grave'. Erich begins to show interest in Elisabeth, promising her mother that 'no-one in the world could love Elisabeth the way I do'.

Reinhardt returns home for another brief visit and gives Elisabeth his composition 'Twelve Songs for Elisabeth', which they sing together. As Reinhardt departs this time, Elisabeth knows that they will not be together again:

Reinhardt: I want to ask you something, Elisabeth. Something very important. I mean something which will be important for the rest of our lives . . . But I can only ask when I am ready. After I have first been out . . . when I can go to your mother and say, 'I . . . want to take Elisabeth with me. Out into the world'.

Elisabeth knows that their relationship is at an end. Their lives are moving in different directions and no compromise can be reached. Two years pass. Elisabeth has remained faithful to Reinhardt. On the day of his final exam, she travels to Hamburg to congratulate him. On her arrival, she discovers a strange woman asleep in his bed. Elisabeth does not want Reinhardt to know she has been there and begs the housekeeper not to inform him. Elisabeth returns home and marries Erich, whilst Reinhardt, on hearing of the marriage, travels to Rome to work on his compositions. Whilst in Rome, Reinhardt has a brief affair with an Italian opera singer, Loretta. After the performance of his composition by Loretta, he soon realises that his true love is Elisabeth, here representative of the homeland and Germany.

Reinhardt resolves to return and attempt to win Elisabeth back. On Reinhardt's return, Erich welcomes him with open arms and invites him to stay at their marital home. Reinhardt and Elisabeth begin to spend time together. In Erich's absence, Reinhardt takes Elisabeth rowing on the lake, so important to their young love. This journey represents Reinhardt's first moments alone with Elisabeth since her marriage to Erich and the commencement of his campaign to win Elisabeth back:

**TO VIEW THIS FIGURE PLEASE REFER
TO THE PRINTED EDITION**

Figure 2. Elisabeth and Erich on their Wedding day. BAFA 7744

Reinhardt: Water lilies. Do you remember Elisabeth? . . . They're dangerous, Elisabeth. Don't you think so? There are the bells of the church of Mary. How clear they are ringing today, your wedding bells. Why did you do it?

Elisabeth: Don't ask, Reinhardt.

On their return to the house, Reinhardt pursues his point more vehemently. Elisabeth stays true to Erich and resists Reinhardt's advances. That evening, Reinhardt dances with Elisabeth at a local gathering. In an intoxicating scene, Elisabeth and Reinhardt swirl around the dance floor, whilst Erich looks on, concerned only with his wife's happiness. The scene emphasises the differences between the wholesome and solid Erich, described by the *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* as 'an honourable and hard-working husband',⁶⁰ and the 'artistic temperament'⁶¹ of Reinhardt:

Elisabeth's mother: Aren't you dancing, Erich?

Erich: I can't dance. I have never danced in my life . . . I can never be like that. Reinhardt is an artist. He knows how to give joy so well. And Elisabeth. Elisabeth is never more beautiful than when she is happy.

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Elisabeth realises the importance of the dance and flees the hall with Reinhardt in pursuit:

- Reinhardt: Why did you run away, Elisabeth?
Elisabeth: I was hot from all that dancing. I feared that I might catch cold.
Reinhardt: But it is warm, Elisabeth.
Elisabeth: Yes, isn't it.
Reinhardt: But how is your heart? Hot or cold?
Elisabeth: I don't know . . .
Reinhardt: Are you so keen to get out of here? Are you afraid to be alone with me?
Elisabeth: I've got nothing to be afraid of.
Reinhardt: Oh no? I know as well as you do. When I was dancing with you in my arms, it was the same as before.
Elisabeth: You shouldn't think about that, Reinhardt.
Reinhardt: I must think it. And you think it too.
Elisabeth: No. Let me go. There must be an end to all this.
Reinhardt: Elisabeth, come with me out into the big, wide world. As you promised you would. [She flees]

That night, Erich expresses his desire that 'Elisabeth should be happy at any price', and sets her free from the marriage. The scene, described as being 'the most painful and yet the most beautiful of their marriage', shows Erich to be 'strong and comforting', winning the heart of Elisabeth:⁶²

- Erich: He has always stood between us. Even when he wasn't here. Isn't that right? [She does not reply] See? You can be happy. But I'm not thinking of my happiness. I'm only thinking of yours. In the last few days, I've seen your happiness for the first time. It's in your eyes, because of Reinhardt. I give you your freedom.
Elisabeth: You can do that? You can do that, Erich?
Erich: It is because I love you that I want your happiness.

Elisabeth recognises the meaning of true love through Erich and resolves to tell Reinhardt of her decision. She sees Reinhardt looking at Erich's beehives and approaches him:

- Reinhardt: Freedom is only for the strongest. Nature is correct.
Elisabeth: I am free. Erich gave me my freedom last night, Reinhardt. For ever.
Reinhardt: Are you mine, Elisabeth?

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Elisabeth: No. He is stronger. I know that now.

Reinhardt: Elisabeth. Do you want to sacrifice this? Your happiness? Your life? Me? Your love?

Elisabeth: You must understand. In this place and among these people, I have a different sort of freedom. I'm sure all of your things are lovely, but that is not my world at all. What you have experienced in Italy, have achieved there. Do you see? I'm right, don't you think? I have grown strong here and now I love Erich. When he gave me my freedom yesterday night, freedom to be with you, I knew I must stay true to him forever. Now, I must say goodbye to you. Go out into the world. You must go. Go to Hamburg, tomorrow to Rome, the next day to Athens and so on.

Reinhardt leaves to continue his life and that evening, for the first time, Elisabeth tells Erich she loves him. Erich cries tears of joy. The film reverts back to the present time with the elderly couple sitting at the dining-room table in the hotel. Elisabeth reasserts her fidelity to Erich and reaffirms her decision to stay true to him, even after his death:

Elisabeth: We were loyal, Reinhardt. Both of us. You to your work . . . and have been successful the whole world over . . . and me, in my small world, in which I have grown strong and to my duty after Erich's death, to preserve and gather what he began at Immensee. So we were true. Both of us. True to ourselves.

Reinhardt departs for Amsterdam without Elisabeth, 'leaving behind him the dream and happiness of Immensee'.⁶³

The central character of the film, Elisabeth, found the true expression of her life in her loyalty to her husband, Erich, and after his death, in the continuation of his legacy. She chooses a hard-working husband of the land over an artistic and world-famous conductor and composer. She finds joy in the more simple life at Immensee, her birthplace and home until her eventual death. Her homeland generated strength within her. She is separated from Reinhardt and aligned to Erich from the outset of the film, when Reinhardt expresses his wish to travel the world, whilst Erich is set to inherit the estate of Immensee, tying him to the land. The key aspect of Elisabeth's character, however, is her steadfast loyalty to her husband in the face of temptation. She sacrifices her happiness for Erich, and discovers that her choice was more rewarding than she could have imagined. Once again, the key themes of loyalty and sacrifice emerge as a characteristic of the leading female protagonist, linking the image of the mother to that of the wife, the two most desired images of women in the films of the Third Reich.

Unlike Harlan's other productions, *Immensee* was not subject to Goebbels' green editing pen. Harlan recalls that Goebbels 'spoke about *Immensee* in extravagant terms. He said to me that it required no cutting, no modifications. Of all the films that I made during the war, this was the only one which remained true to the original scenarios and was distributed just as I had foreseen.'⁶⁴ The film was indeed popular. In 1944, Ufa reported that the film which had cost RM 2,059,000 to produce had made a profit of RM 4,305,000, attracting more than 8 million Germans in the Reich's original borders.⁶⁵ One year previously, the film had received the *Prädikat* of *Künstlerisch wertvoll* (Artistically Valuable) and *Volkstümlich wertvoll* (Nationally Valuable). So important was *Immensee* to the war effort and the maintenance of home front and front-line morale that it was distributed to places without a cinema by special order.⁶⁶ Söderbaum believed the success of the film should be attributed to the natural chemistry between herself and Raddatz (Reinhardt), noting that Raddatz had once told her,

Elisabeth, Aels, Albrecht and Reinhardt were one because we never acted them. Rather we experienced it, because of this chemistry in us, and we therefore achieved such a strong public reaction. What comes from the heart must go to the heart. That is the secret as to why these two films had such a great success.⁶⁷

The film touched the public, portraying an image of hope in wartime. Klaus Jebens, the soldier who bought the estate of Immensee, stated in 1993, 'It was very depressing. It was wartime. The whole world was . . . destroyed and then we saw this film with this unfulfilled love.'⁶⁸ The cinema offered the German public images of hope in wartime, portraying characters which gave them comfort. *Immensee*, as Söderbaum admitted, appealed mainly to the soldiers in the front line. Previous films, however, sought to bolster the female population on the home front, with both realistic and idealistic female images in films from 1937 to 1942.

Notes

- 1 For works on women in the Third Reich see in particular: Abrams, L. and Harvey, L. *Gender Relations in German History: Power, Agency and Experience from the 16th–20th Century*. (UCL Press, London, 1996); Bajohr, S., *op.cit.*; Bock, G., *Zwangsterilisation im National Sozialismus. Studien zur Rassenpolitik und Frauenpolitik*. (Westdeutscher Verlag, Opladen, 1986); Bock, G., 'Anti-natalism, Maternity, and Paternity in National Socialist Racism,' in Crew, D.F. (ed.), *Nazism and German Society, 1933–1945*. (Routledge, London, 1994); Bridenthal, R.,

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- 2 Bock, G., ‘Anti-Natalism, Maternity, and Paternity in National Socialist Racism’, in Crew, D. F., *op.cit.*, p. 234.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 247.
- 5 Saldern, A.v., ‘Victims or Perpetrators? Controversies about the Role of Women in the Nazi State’, in Crew. D.F. (ed.) *op.cit.*, pp.141–64.
- 6 HOOVER. Ts Germany. N27 Rp35. Papers of Getrud Scholz-Klink. Führer’s address to the Women of Germany. 7th *Reichsparteitag*, Nürnberg, 1935.
- 7 HOOVER. Ts Germany. N27 Rp35. Papers of Gertrud Scholz-Klink. Scholtz Klink’s address to the 7th *Reichsparteitag*, Nürnberg, 1935.
- 8 BAP R56VI/34. Goebbels’ speech to the RPL. Day of the *Gau* and *Kreispropagandaleiter*. *Reichsparteitag*, 14 September 1936.
- 9 BAP R56VI/34. *Denkschrift über Nationalsozialistischen Film*. Jürbos, Member of the *Reichsschriftumskammer*. 30 March 1937.
- 10 BAP R56I/89. 1939 Report to RMVP from RPL. Author Unknown.
- 11 ‘Deutsche Familie im Film’, in *Filmwelt*, 22 December 1939. No. 51.
- 12 BAP R56VI/5a. *Korrespondenz über eingereichte Filmmanuskripte und Filmdenken*. To the RFK forwarded from the RPA Halle, 1941. No Author. No date.
- 13 BAP NS 18/357. Tießler to Hippler. Quoting Reich Chancellery Document, quoting report from *Gauleiter* of Brandenburg. Berlin. 24 June 1942. Ti/Ge/Rth.
- 14 BAP NS 18/357. Tießler to Hippler. *Betr: Kinderreiche Familien im Film*. Berlin. 24 February 1943. Ti/H/Ri/Jb.
- 15 BAP NS 18/357. Tießler to Frowein. *Betr: Kinderreiche Familien im Film*. Berlin. 24 May 1943. Ti/Ge.

- 16 A scene-by-scene breakdown of the film plot is provided by Kanzog, K, 'Staatspolitisch besonders Wertvoll'. *Ein handbuch zu 30 deutschen Spielfilmen der Jahre 1934–1945*. (Diskurs, Munich, 1994), pp. 212–15.
- 17 'Filme, die wir sahen. Mutterliebe', in *Filmwelt*, 12 January 1940, p. 17.
- 18 Marben, R., 'Deutsche Familie im Film', in *Filmwelt*, 22 December 1939. No. 51.
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- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 Marben, R., 'Deutsche Familie im Film', in *Filmwelt*, 22 December 1939. No. 51.
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 'Zwei neue Filme in Wien', in *Filmwoche*, 12 July 1939. No. 28, p. 869.
- 29 Marben, R., 'Deutsche Familie im Film', in *Filmwelt*, 22 December 1939. No. 51.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 Interview with Gustav Ucicky in *Filmwoche*, 12 July 1939. No. 28.
- 32 Holscher, H., 'Menschen wie du und ich', in *Filmwelt*, 22 December 1939. No. 51.
- 33 Review of *Mutterliebe* in *Filmwelt*, 12 January 1940.
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- 43 Kanzog, K., *op.cit.*, p. 284.
- 44 BAFA 723. Ufa publicity booklet. *Werbematerial*.

- 45 BAP R55/63. Ufa Box Office receipts from 1 June 1943 – 31 January 1944.
- 46 BAP NS 18/ 357. RPL Rural Surveys. 1942.
- 47 BAP NS 18/347. Danzig-Westpreußen. z. Hd. V. *Gaugeschäftsführer* to the *Parteikanzlei*. 1 November 1941. Preuß, however, is writing a letter of complaint regarding the representation of Dörensens in the film, but regards the film itself as a masterpiece.
- 48 BAP R55/63. Ufa Distribution Record. 1 June 1943 – 31 January 1944.
- 49 BAP NS18/357. Telegram from *Gau East Prussia* to RPL. Kat. HARR . Lbg. Nr.3004. Kreizberger, 09:04, 21 November 1942.
- 50 Figures from Sander, A.U., *op.cit.*, Tables.
- 51 BAP R55/ 663. The RFI to the Reich Minister. Berlin, 15 November 1944.
- 52 Other films were: *Bismarck, Der alte und junge König, Carl Peters, Der Choral von Leuthen, Die Degenhardts, Die Entlassung, Friederich Schiller, Der Fuchs von Glenarvon, Der Große König, GPU, Germanin, Heimkehr, Der Herrscher, Jud Süß, Der Kaiser von Kalifornien, Kampfgeschwader Lützow, Der Katzensteg, Leinen aus Irland, Lieselotte von der Pfalz, Mein Leben für Irland, Ohn Krüger, Reitet für Deutschland, Schwarzer Jäger Johanna, Stukas, Trenck, der Pandur, U-Boote Westwärts, über alles in der Welt, Das Unsterbliche Herz, Der unendliche Weg, Die Rothschilds, Verräter and Ziel in den Wolken.*
- 53 BAP R55/00063. According to a letter from the RFI to the Reich Minister on 24 November 1944, the final selection of films was; *Annelie, Bismarck, Der Choral von Leuthen, Diesel, Die Entlassung, Friederich Schiller, Der Fuchs von Glenarvon, Der Große König, Junge Adler, Kameraden, Die Katzensteg, Mein Leben für Irland, Ohm Krüger, Reitet für Deutschland, Schwarzer Jäger Johanna, Standschütze Bruggler and Der unendliche Weg.*
- 54 Interview with Kristina Söderbaum. ‘*Die Reise nach Schweden. Kristina Söderbaum. Porträt ein Schauspielerin.*’ Hans-Christoph Blumenberg. Zdf/Sat, 1993.
- 55 Söderbaum, K., *Nichts bleibt immer so. Erinnerung.* (Herbig, Munich, 1992), p. 174.
- 56 *Ibid.*, p.175.
- 57 Interview with Kristina Söderbaum. Imperial War Museum Sound Archives (hereafter IWMS) 2933. Reel 1. n.d.
- 58 Söderbaum, K., *op.cit.*, p. 176.
- 59 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*. No. 1459. BAFA 7744.
- 60 *Ibid.*
- 61 *Ibid.*
- 62 All quotes here from *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*. No. 1459. BAFA 7744.
- 63 *Ibid.*
- 64 Harlan, V., *Le Cinéma Allemand selon Goebbels.* (Éditions France, Paris, 1974) p. 228.

Mothers and Wives in the Feature Films

- 65 BAK R 109II/15. Fol.1. Ufa costings and profits sheets, 1944.
- 66 BAP NS18/346. Notice for Tießler from Raether (*Oberdienstleiter* des RPL) Hö/Goe/I/108f, 8 September 1943.
- 67 Söderbaum, K., *op.cit.*, p.175. The other film referred to here is *Opfergang*, which was produced simultaneously with *Immensee*.
- 68 Zdf/Sat interview. Blumenberg, 1993.

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War Women in the Feature Films of the Third Reich, 1939–1945

Introduction

On 16 February 1943, Goebbels contacted Lammers regarding the preparations for the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations for Ufa, commenting that ‘in this War, German film has obtained such an outstanding significance as a propaganda instrument, that I appreciate the service in wartime of a few leading men in German film production’.¹ In the same memorandum, Goebbels demanded that presentation of war service crosses, normally reserved for military duty, be extended to the producers, directors and actors of the films of the Third Reich. Directors such as Veit Harlan, Wolfgang Liebeneiner and Karl Ritter, responsible for producing some of the regime’s most effective propaganda films, stood to receive the supreme honour of a first-class cross for war service.² The fact that the RMVP was prepared to bestow such a title upon film directors suggests the militaristic importance of wartime film production.

Similarly, in a speech to the ‘war meeting’ of the RFK in Berlin on 15 February 1941, Goebbels confirmed the importance of the film industry during the war years: ‘Film is no mere entertainment medium . . . Film today has a state and political function to understand.’³ Hans Hinkel, RFI in 1944, observed that ‘There are no apolitical artists. Every work is essential. [That is] the task of German film production.’⁴

To the RMVP, therefore, every work was perceived as crucial, whether it was overtly political in content or whether it provided an escapist outlet for the wartime populace. One should not automatically assume the militaristic nature of war film production. Indeed escapism and entertainment were paramount in the maintenance of morale.⁵ Goebbels recognised the need for relaxation and entertainment in the war years. Diary entries in 1943 detail the role of the wartime cinema, as perceived by Goebbels, who noted in his diary on 10 May 1943, that ‘cinemas and theatres are all that is left for the little man to go to for recreation. If we take them away, where is he to turn to forget the war for a couple of hours?’⁶

This did not exclude the portrayal of war themes on the screen. The war film itself could combine an understanding of military necessities with entertainment

or dramatic content. The war film genre lends itself to diversity, allowing escapist and diversionary themes to develop within a general framework. With reference to the genre, Pierre Sorlin notes in his study of European cinema, 'war films do not constitute a genre in the ordinary meaning of the word; they belong to the various categories of drama, adventure, documentary and comedy'.⁷ Nazi cinema, therefore, was able to exploit the theme of war from many angles; from the newsreel, to the *Kulturfilm*, and even in the feature film, disguising militarism in a humanistic context. Cinema in wartime was intended to appeal to and operate within two different markets: the front lines and the home front.

Strenuous efforts were made to transport the cinema to the front line. In a report regarding the employment of art in war, Hinkel stressed that 'German film was made mobile . . . In the first year of war alone, over 3,600 film copies and the necessary amount of travel apparatus and sound film vehicles were made available and sent on their way.'⁸

Such a mobilisation was both desirable and necessary. It enabled the RMVP to continue a cinematic propaganda campaign intended to boost troop morale, permitting the troops to forge a comforting link to their home, through feature films and newsreels. In an article for *Filmwelt* on 29 December 1939 Curt Belling, *Hauptstellenleiter* of the RPL, asserted that,

Our soldiers [are] at the front, in their bases, in their war ports or wherever they have to perform their duties, protecting the front lines or the homeland . . . the edification and restoration of the cultural and psychological [soul] is a task from which German cinema cannot shirk. Film images in their diverse manifestations help to maintain the connection between home and our men on duty at the front . . . The feature film communicates experience – happy or serious, pensive or active, it entertains, uplifts, amuses and gives the men at the front regular evidence of the unwavering optimism of the homeland.⁹

This connection was essential for the Total War effort on the home front. Film provided a link to brothers, fathers, husbands and loved ones, confirming their heroism and the necessity of their absence, as well as boosting morale for a population enduring wartime hardships. Hinkel communicated in an August 1944 report, entitled *Film und Totaler Krieg* (Film and Total War), 'The fact that in the last year over 1.1 million people visited German cinemas, gives us an indication of the meaning of our film production for the care of our fighting and producing peoples.'¹⁰ He added in an earlier tract, *Kampf bis zum Endsieg* (Fight until the Final Victory), that 'The film experience has become still the only possibility to alleviate the hearts or relax the nerves of our fighting comrades.'¹¹ Hence, film was important from many angles as an integral part of the war effort as entertainment, political propaganda, an informational source, educational material, a morale booster and most importantly to build a bridge between the front lines and the homeland, which was crucial in comforting those separated by war.

War also placed additional burdens upon the film artists themselves. The director Wolfgang Liebeneiner recognised the strains placed on the artistic community:

Each day standing in the studio and everyday having to perform again in the theatres, sometimes in between and as well as your radio work or rehearsing in the morning, filming in the afternoon and performing in the theatre in the evening. This is particularly difficult for women. And when you have to lie in an air-raid shelter the night before such a work-filled day, it is very straining for the spirit to stand before the camera or on the stage and . . . be cheerful . . . One must often have tremendous will, and have the courage to go on living . . . but you all do it so well . . . and this proves how important your work is. Always remember what artists have given the National Socialist Great German Reich.¹²

Their service did not limit itself to film and theatre work. Film artists were also expected to engage in live performances for the troops. Liebeneiner continues,

German film will never take a back seat over the artistic care of our soldiers and those producing in the war industry. Now many active film actors and actresses have given up their free time to give joy and relaxation to each man and woman, strengthening and hardening those in the service of protecting our homeland and working places.¹³

In many cases, actors and actresses were obliged to perform war duties. This was confirmed by a memorandum from Dr Müller-Goerne, dated 8 March 1945, which stated, 'Actors on list one (the main list) are obliged by the RfK [to participate in] war service . . . That is clear.'¹⁴ Actresses were reluctant to engage in the *Truppenbetreuung* (troop care) programme, due to the lack of financial rewards. Hinkel observed in August 1943 that the fees for such performances were 'extraordinarily low'. He remarked that it was no wonder that, 'Jenny Jugo, Luise Ullrich, Brigitte Horney, Hilde Krahl and other well-known actresses gave themselves very reluctantly to these events.'¹⁵ Olga Tschechowa was offered RM 75 for a performance, when at a private function she could have expected to command RM 800.¹⁶ Actresses were also expected to take part in State-sponsored programmes. In October 1938, Paula Wessely was engaged in the *Winterhilfswerk* programme (WHW)¹⁷ and in 1936, Sybille Schmitz briefly taught film studies at the University of Cologne, alongside Werner Krauss and Emil Jannings.¹⁸

War itself had a dramatic effect on the film industry. Materials were becoming scarce, as were finances. The war placed tremendous strains on film production. The film industry experienced a drop in interest in the more propagandistic aspects of a cinema visit, leading the RMVP to concentrate on feature film production, providing the flagging population with escapist entertainment. The RMVP *Tätigkeitsbericht* (Activity Report)¹⁹ for 19 December 1944 noted that 'the interest in the German weekly newsreel has in recent times diminished again . . . Run a

weekly newsreel after the main feature and one can see that 50% of the cinema-goers leave the theatre after the main feature.²⁰ General attendance was also declining in late 1943, as a report entitled 'the Development of Cinema Visiting' noted,

with the beginning of the intensification of the air-terror, a tremendous drop [in attendance] applies from about the middle of 1943. Since October 1943, the box office figures are, for the first time, below that of the previous year. Nevertheless, the difference between the daily average at the beginning of 1943 compared with the beginning of 1944 is not so great.²¹

This statement notes the effect of the air raids on attendance figures. The air war destroyed many cinematic facilities. Many theatres were lost in the routine bombing of towns and cities and the Ufa weekly meeting minutes frequently noted cinema closures.²² Serious disruption was caused by the raids on studios. A phosphor bomb attack on the Tempelhof film studios was reported on 23 March 1944²³ and earlier, on 6 March 1944, the main Babelsberg Studios experienced a similar tragedy.²⁴ This threatened the very production of feature films themselves.

The film industry was frustrated by the continual drive for economy, which effected every aspect of production, including women's work in the industry from 1944. A secret minute, entitled, 'Decisions of the Reich Minister regarding the responsibility and measures for the limitation of German film production for the purposes of the Total War concept', was composed by Hinkel on the 29 July 1944, following a meeting with Goebbels on the previous day.²⁵ It detailed the necessary cuts and limitations that Goebbels demanded, which were intended to reduce the amount of materials used by the industry. Production costs in general were to be lowered, which were not to exceed RM 600,000 but could rise to RM 1,000,000 if the Reich Minister was in agreement. Colour film, or Agfa film, was to be used only with special permission from Goebbels himself. The length of films had been reduced just seven days earlier, as a memorandum from Hinkel, released on 21 July 1944, noted: 'that from 1 January 1945 feature films can only be 2,200m in length and culture films only 300m in length. Exceptions need my personal permission.'²⁶ A 'film-producing community' was to be established in Berlin under point 4 of the 29 July memorandum: 'It has been agreed with the Reich Minister that there is a possibility to organise a war-work community between the Berlin companies, Ufa, Tobis Terra and Berlin Film, for saving on labour and material production [costs].' Point 5 detailed the releasing of 50 per cent of the present levels of personnel to the armaments industry or the army, as Goebbels had done under the terms of the *Frauenaktion*.²⁷ No new personnel were to be recruited in the film industry. Staff levels were to be reduced in other sections. The film studio staff were to be reduced by two-thirds of the previous figure and 'only a minimum'

of composers and musicians were to remain in employment. Particular areas of film production were especially hindered by the War. Cartoon production was to 'lie dormant', the *Kulturfilm* was to be reduced by 50 per cent, whilst, 'in general, the political propaganda film will no longer be produced'.²⁸ Perhaps the biggest cuts came as a result of the shortfall in actual materials. The publicity departments were to be reduced by 50 per cent, 'radically combined' and instructed to 'economise on the large amounts of unnecessary pictures, posters and textual material produced'. The costume departments were to be reduced by two-thirds and were told that 'in general, it is demanded that [the production] of costume or fashion films with special, beautiful and very luxurious clothes is to stop'. One general price was set for cinema entry at 50pf,²⁹ whereas previously various prices were set for different social groupings, such as the HJ or BDM.³⁰ These economic measures were perceived as necessary, making film production from 1944 take a back seat, as economic and material pressures became increasingly demanding in the final stages of the War. The 'special permission' clauses of the above directives were indeed enacted, as in the case of the 'final' film of the Reich, *Kolberg*, which cost RM 8,800,000 to produce and made a loss of RM 3,350,000.³¹

The economic situation led to a redefinition of the structures of the film industry, in many cases resulting in the closure and merging of departments, causing many employees to be redistributed. In 1942, employment in the *Reichsfilmprüfstelle*, the film censorship office, corresponded to trends outlined by the *Frauenaktion*, with women being employed in mainly the middle and lower service.³² By 1944, the decision had been taken to phase out the *Reichsfilmprüfstelle*, and many employees were gradually being released into the armaments industry.³³ The employees of the *Deutschenkulturfilmzentrale* (German Central Culture Film Department) suffered a similar fate. It was announced on 8 January 1943 that, following a verbal ministerial decision on 31 December 1942, the *Deutschenkulturfilmzentrale* would be closed and merged with the *Deutsche Wochenschauzentrale* (German Central Weekly Newsreel Department) to form the new *Deutsche Wochenschau- und Kulturfilmzentrale*.³⁴ Staff were to be redistributed to the army, the armaments industry and the *Arbeitsamt*, whilst some remained in the newly created firm.³⁵

The film concerns also found that many of their departments were being closed down and merged into larger, more cost-effective operations. Both women and men were being transferred into the army or armaments industry after 25 July 1944. On 4 August 1944, *Ufa-Sonderproduktion* (Ufa Special Production), with a staff of 33 men and 27 women, was closed down; 21 of the men and 8 of the women were released for war work. The rest of the staff, along with their work, were transferred to the *Kulturfilm* department of Ufa.³⁶ Ufa also lost their *Wirtschaftsfilm* (Business Film) department, comprising of 92 men and 50 women, of which 62 men and 47 women were to be released for war service.³⁷ On the same day, the press departments of Berlin Film, Terra, Tobis and Ufa were closed, losing

all of their staff to war service, with the exception of three women. Along with the affiliated departments in Berlin, Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Munich, Vienna, Leipzig and Breslau, the closure of the press departments would mean 'a saving 750kg of paper, 50% of printing costs, 50% postal relief and 50% of photo materials.'³⁸

Despite the difficulties of wartime production, special emphasis was placed on film as a means of propaganda and entertainment. One of the key areas to be targeted by wartime film production was the home front, as noted in an SD report from October 1940, which also stressed the duty of the film industry: 'German film production in the war has – according to the reports from Munich – strengthened the consciousness of the general public.'³⁹

With the majority of the male population engaged in the armed services, despite the existence of mobile cinema units, the majority of the cinema-going public during the War years was female. This was noted in a report to Tießler from the rural districts in November 1942:

Films that deal exclusively with the current war situation, such as Stukas and Kampfgeschwader Lützow and so on, have been fundamentally rejected, with the comments that one has already had enough information regarding the war anyway, through the newspapers and the radio. With regards to these political war films, one must consider that **the majority of today's cinema-goers are women and hard worked old people**, who . . . want to relax and have a good rest, and who would like [to see] contemporary entertainment films.⁴⁰

The effect of film on the female population was considered crucial by the RMVP, as tickets for key productions such as *Heimkehr* (1941) were distributed among female workers in the armaments industry.⁴¹ Film propaganda had to adapt to two separate audiences, each with different morale needs: soldiers and home front audiences. Some war films, therefore, incorporated human elements into their coverage of armed conflict. War films with female characters provided this aspect and gave women experiencing wartime conditions role models and sympathetic figures. The films to be dealt with in this chapter, *Wunschkonzert* (Request Concert, Eduard v. Borsody, 1940), *Auf Wiedersehen Franziska* (Goodbye Franziska, Helmut Käutner, 1941), *Die große Liebe* (The Great Love, Rolf Hansen, 1942) and *Kolberg* (Veit Harlan, 1945), all contained a series of themes, with which female audiences could identify: family, the birth rate, wartime employment, train farewells, waiting, home duty, rations, air raids, difficulties of love and the dangers facing a population at war. In film, war women found themselves divided into three categories: that of mother, wife or sweetheart and worker.

Women's place in the war effort was confirmed in the reality of wartime existence and had to be expressed in the films of the Reich. Women were not excluded from roles in war-based films. In fact, Goebbels positively encouraged the production of war films including significant female characters. On 29 April

1937, when Karl Ritter and Matthias Wiemann presented him with *Unternehmen Michael* (Operation Michael, Karl Ritter, 1937), one of the more militaristic productions of the pre-war years, he noted that it was ‘totally without women’s roles. That is too depressing.’⁴²

It was necessary to include women’s roles in the films of the Reich, firstly, in order to reassure the soldiers at the front that their wives and sweethearts were engaged in wholesome activities (as mothers, nurses etc.) and secondly, to confirm that women had a place within the War. The experience of war is portrayed in contemporary war films, produced between 1940 and 1942. The themes dealt with in the 1937 Ritter film, *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort*, can be seen as a basis for the later works, such as *Wunschkonzert* (1940), *Auf Wiedersehen Franziska* (1941) and *Die große Liebe* (1942). All of these films addressed universal concerns and fears and were intended to target the female wartime audience, in their variety and strength of the female characters.

The themes to be expressed in later productions were already discussed in the 1937 Ritter production, *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort*. Set in the First World War, the film told the story of a group of men being sent to the front line. The troop are forced to spend six hours in Berlin when their transport to France is delayed. They plead with their Lieutenant, Prätorius, to let them spend time with their families. They give him their word of honour that they will return to the station on time. The film explores the lives of the individual members of the group. Hartmann visits his family, Hellwig has his first sexual experience, Sasse gets involved with a band of communists, whilst the intellectual Kirschhoff liaises with a pacifist. Prätorius has his own love interest in the form of Inge, a local nurse.

The Ufa premiere programme for *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort* stated that ‘Ritter selects . . . scenes with consideration, which [demonstrate] the human touch or are politically significant. We experience the reunion of sons with their mother, of fathers with their family, of the fiancé with his bride.’⁴³ In *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort*, the human element is aligned with political significance. Women are clearly categorised as mother, wife and sweetheart. In the film, however, the division is more basic and women are the main instigators of good and evil, finding themselves being either a symbol of purity or depravity. Two parallel themes run together in the plot. The troop is portrayed as a unit (enabling the film-maker to exploit the themes of heroism, community spirit, honour between comrades and soldierly duty) and as individuals (allowing scope for exploratory forays into the personal lives of the unit, examining more emotional aspects such as relationships and love and families.)

In this film, women are the initiators of all activity. They are divided into two supplementary categories, each with subdivisions: ‘good’ women creating healthy relationships *for* men (the mother, the war-worker, the lover and the nurse) and ‘bad’ women provoking unhealthy activity *in* men (the communist, the pacifist

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Figure 3. Inge and Prätorius. BAFA 17844

and the career-minded adulteress). Unhealthy relationships are the domain of the intellectual Dr Kirschhoff and the violent communist Sasse, whilst healthy relationships are allotted to the least suspect of the male characters: Hartmann, Krawutke, Peter, Hellwig, Janke and, of course, Prätorius.

Women are not just depicted as the love interest. They are shown performing civil tasks, replacing their husbands and sons during their absence. Frau Hartmann is the brassy Berliner type. Here Frau Hartmann has assumed her husband's previous position as a tram driver, helping out with the smooth running of Berlin in her husband's absence, filling a job which was traditionally a man's domain. It is interesting to note that when Hartmann surprises his wife on the tram, she loses control of the vehicle. Hartmann is forced to intervene and saves the tram from demolishing some cars, pointing to the fact that, whilst women were performing these tasks in a national emergency, the men are always more able and will reclaim their job on their return. This is also the case for Krawutke's mother, who is running the barber's shop in his absence. He surprises her at the salon and immediately reassumes his position, taking over the shaving of a customer from his mother. His mother is relegated to the kitchen, preparing tea and food for her son.

Urlaub auf Ehrenwort also allows women's professions in their own right, but confines them to specifically female domains. If a woman should break out of her

designated sphere, like the sculptress Vera Georgi, she is to be punished accordingly. The profession of nursing is held to be appropriate for the true heroine of the piece, Lieutenant Prätorius' blonde girlfriend, Inge, who is held in stark contrast to the slovenly communist women. Inge is the combination of the virtues of feminine love and devotion and duty to a designated cause. She is the epitome of idealistic femininity and, as such, a career of nursing is very fitting. For each 'good relationship' Ritter presents a 'bad' one: the idealistic Prätorius and Inge versus the communist Sasse and Fritz; the extravagant Lula Frey and Dr Kirchhoff versus the simple and undemanding Anna and Janke; the faithful servant and worker Frau Hartmann versus the selfish and career-minded Vera Georgi. The aims of the degenerate women are frustrated and they find themselves alone, whilst the true happiness at the end of the piece rests with the faithful mothers, wives and sweet-hearts whose existence is dependent upon their men.

The 1937 film set the scene for later wartime productions. The image of women portrayed in Ritter's film was reflected in films from 1939 to 1945, although the image itself underwent transformations according to the military status of Germany and progression in the War.

Wunschkonzert (Request Concert, Eduard von Borsody, 1940)

The first significant piece is *Wunschkonzert*, a *Staatsauftragsfilm* (State Sponsored Film), produced in 1940, directed by Eduard von Borsody and starring a plethora of stars of the 1930s and 1940s such as Carl Raddatz, Ilse Werner, Malte Jaeger, Marika Röck and Heinz Rühmann. The film became one of the main box office successes of the war years, grossing RM 7,200,000, making a profit of RM 4,239,000⁴⁴ in Greater Germany alone, attracting over 20 million viewers.⁴⁵ This success was in part, if not wholly, derived from the popularity of the event in the title of the film: the Request Concert. The Request Concert, or *Wunschkonzert*, was a radio programme, broadcast on Sunday afternoons at 15:00. It allowed messages to be passed from the front lines to the home front and *vice versa*, forging an important link for the fighting troops and their relatives, whilst additionally providing entertainment through popular songs and sketches from stars of stage and screen. The programme was regarded as a primary example of the power of German radio in the propaganda war. Hans Hinkel in his report on *The Employment of our Art in War*, praised the Request Concert:

Radio has proved its value as a news instrument, as a propaganda weapon and as a mediator between the front and the homeland. In the long and cold winter months, it provided for entertainment and diversion. One may consider the *Wunschkonzert* for the armed forces as the most visible expression of the care work of radio for our soldiers. Up until the summer of 1940 alone, its accomplishments can be seen; 60,000 spectators

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Figure 4. Vera Georgi confronted in the Studio. BAFA 17824

have already been counted in the large studio at the House of German Radio, part of which is due to the Berlin Philharmonic. Voluntary donations at these radio events have up until this point in time raised RM 5.2 Million. The value of ‘gifts in kind’ has already totalled over RM 1 Million. Foreign countries have likewise given money and gifts in kind totalling the amount of around RM 1 Million . . . the money and gifts in kind have benefited the relatives and families of our soldiers. Of course our soldiers are also provided with radio units. Since the outbreak of war about 800,000 radio devices have been put at the disposal of the armed forces altogether. The comradeship and service of the German radio strengthens the personal bond of the individual soldier with his family. Since 20 January 1940 every night it tells the soldier about important events in his family and at home.⁴⁶

The film sought to exploit the popularity of the *Wunschkonzert* and the link it provided between home and front, developing individual storylines within a general framework of contemporary events. The SD report noted how the film capitalised on the success of the radio programme:

existing reports from all parts of the Reich find that the film *Wunschkonzert* has [gained] the largest interest and the enthusiastic approval of the public. Already before the attempt to trigger large-scale interest through detailed propaganda in the press, [it had already been achieved] through the popularity of the Request concert [itself].⁴⁷

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Figure 5. Ilse Werner – Inge Wagner in the 1940 film

Ilse Werner, who played Inge Wagner in the film, participated in the radio request concerts and explains their emotional appeal:

Heinz Goedecke led the programme, and always sent greetings and news from the front to the homeland in between the individual musical and other performances, and so produced an intensive bond between the people at home and the soldiers away . . . Truth is: nearly every family had a son, a brother, a father, a husband or a sweetheart at the front, [they were] worried about him, waiting for news. And then when the programme, Wunschkonzert, came over the airwaves, millions of radios were switched on . . . In each war year, I often happily appeared in these Request concerts, to sing, to whistle and . . . say a few words to the public – in the conviction that it would help everyone who was helpless, who was afraid. For a few moments, banishing their fears and worries.⁴⁸

Werner's sentiments were echoed in an article discussing the film, in *Filmwelt* on 13 September 1940, which stated that,

the word *Wunschkonzert* has, in the last years, become one of the most popular in our vocabulary. In one word all strands become visible: the front and home interrelate and it is, at the same time, the eloquent expression of the genuine and courageous romanticism of our time . . . Today greetings for the front personally reach the soldier at the most lonely post through the radio, making it seem as if, 'they lived just next door to one another'.⁴⁹

Given this emphasis on the family in the Request Concerts, the film was directed towards the female audience, providing them with suitable pastimes and role models and depicting themes with special reference to the home front. These aspects were clearly demonstrated in the film, which sought to portray the radio as a bridge between the home and the front, as a form of communication between loved ones and families. However, on 29 January 1940, Goebbels' 'secret meetings' in the RMVP perceived the Request Concert quite differently, noting that 'the main purpose of the Request Concerts should be to give the people very fine music. They are not to be turned into a family affair, and "all talk" during the Request Concert should be cut down'.⁵⁰ In fact, the film portrayal of the popular radio programme combined appreciation of musical talent with family concerns, as this was overwhelmingly the appeal of the *Wunschkonzert*, regardless of the wishes of the RMVP. The desire to promote '*fine music*' could not override the fears and worries of women on the home front regarding the fate of their men away on military duty. As A. Schmidt noted, in the Munich edition of the *Filmzeitung*, on 12 January 1941, 'we all realise the importance of the Request Concerts broadcast by German radio; they are a kind of bridge between the homeland and the front. This is a film of war and a film for the people, reflecting our times; but most of all it is a film that entertains,'⁵¹ and it was this often repeated formula of combining entertainment with political propaganda which enabled the RMVP to maintain the interest of the public in the feature film, whilst subtly exploiting the medium for National Socialist purposes. *Wunschkonzert* is in this sense a perfect example of this combination, using performances from Marika Röck and Heinz Rühmann interspersed with the contemporary documentary material in the form of the newsreel. Werner attests that such stars were included by Borsody for this purpose:

This Request Concert in the film *Wunschkonzert* was an effectual highpoint in the plot. In order to make it as attractive as possible, some of the most well-known artists of all time were called forth: Marika Röck, Heinz Rühmann, Paul Hörniger, Hans Brausewelter, Joseph Sieber and the original Bavarian Weiß Ferdl, as well as the most loved German singers – Wilhelm Strienz. When he sang the song, 'Heimat, deine Sterne', which came over the air-waves almost every night, many peoples' tears flowed.⁵²

This aspect, combined with dramatic action, a fictional romance and documentary material gave the film instant popular appeal.

The film essentially explores themes relating to the wartime experience of relationships. The film begins with the meeting of the main protagonists at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The meeting of Inge Wagner and Herbert Koch is a chance one. The couple are thrown into a whirlwind romance which is tragically cut short by Herbert's recall to military duty. On short notice, Herbert leaves Inge to fight in the Spanish Civil War, promising to return and marry her. The onset of the Second World War ensures that Herbert is required to remain with his troop. At this point, Borsody introduces the other key characters of the film: 'Max Kramer, the butcher, Peter Friederich, the teacher, Schwarzkopf, the young music student . . . and Hammer . . . , the baker'.⁵³ The variety of the characters demonstrates that people from all walks of life are united in their determination to serve Germany. This includes Inge's childhood friend, Helmut Winkler, who is in love with Inge. However, she is still loyal to airman Herbert Koch, even though she has not seen or heard from him in over three years. The fate of the characters is then followed through the Request Concert. News, messages and entertainment unite home and front lines. Through the radio, Inge is reunited with Herbert, Frau Schwarzkopf, mother of the young musician, mourns the loss of her son and Peter Friederich learns that his wife has just given birth to a baby boy. The fictional stories of the film are interwoven with performances from key stars of the Third Reich, such as Marika Röck, Wilhelm Strienz, Paul Hörbiger, Heinz Rühmann and Weiß Ferdl. Finally, Helmut is wounded in battle and taken to hospital. Inge vows to come and see him. Coincidentally, Helmut's commander is Herbert Koch, Inge's true love. Helmut confides in Herbert, telling him of his love for Inge. After some confusion, Helmut is corrected and Herbert and Inge are re-united. *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* praised the happy end, stating that the film was, 'an uplifting, rousing portrayal of our time and our collective . . . experience'.⁵⁴

The film opens with bells ringing, heralding the commencement of the 1936 Olympiad, held in Berlin. The film depicts the opening ceremony, placing special emphasis on the Fascistic elements, such as the entry of countries using the Nazi salute (Sweden, Japan and Italy). This is interwoven with the fictional meeting of Herbert Koch and Inge Wagner. Inge cries, 'Here comes the German team!' leading the viewer back into the documentary aspect of the film. The crowd is roused and the camera focuses on Hitler, who looks admiringly on. The glory of the occasion is stressed, which is quite clearly linked to National Socialism and the Führer. The selection of these images as the opening sequence to *Wunschkonzert* points to its propagandistic value. The film-makers of the 1940 film reverted to 1936 in order to remind the German people of 'better times' before the War and that once victory is secured, Germany can once again look forward to these times. The Games are a symbol stressing the victory of Germany over the world (an important message to convey in the midst of war) or used to demonstrate the peaceful intentions of National Socialist Germany in 1936, when her capital city encouraged the unity

of Nations under the banner of sport. This was stressed by the *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*. These images were also intended to stimulate people's fond memories of 1936, as characterised by the games. It is often true to say that the most effective propaganda is based on personal reminiscences and *Wunschkonzert* certainly works on this level. For example, when Inge later hears the Olympic fanfare on the radio in 1940, she is immediately transported back to 1936 and her first meeting with Koch.

The interplay of newsreel, documentary and fictional material is continued in the portrayal of militaristic themes. When Koch is sent to Spain, Borsody mixes the fictional shots of Koch with actual newsreel footage, complemented by glorious music, as the planes and tanks move into action. The inclusion of documentary footage suspended disbelief in the audience and in doing so presented the entirety of the film as 'fact'. This is linked with the combination of militaristic and emotional stories. 'Factual' propaganda was broken up by individualistic plots, such as Herbert and Inge's relationship, the birth of Friederich's son and the interplay between baker and butcher, Kramer and Hammer. This was intensified further with the inclusion of 'raw' entertainment, with performances from Marika Rökk, Heinz Rühmann and Weiß Ferdl.

In 1940, many of the women in the audience could find themselves relating to at least one of the female roles in this film; either as the enamoured Inge, or as the pregnant Frau Friederich, as grieving Frau Schwarzkopf or as the workers, Frau Kramer and Frau Hammer. This relation to personal experience and the combination of the factual and fictional is noted as one of the most important facets of the film by the SD report of 17 February 1941: 'The persistent record [attendance] of this film shows convincing proof that the cinematic formation of current material and present events, which everyone knows from their own experiences, joins with a fictional plot to produce an outstanding interest from all sections of the population.'⁵⁵

Wunschkonzert, like *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort* (1937), had a dual propaganda target, relating specifically to gender divisions. Firstly, these films reassured men at the front that the women at home were engaged in 'wholesome' activities, relieving them of worries regarding fidelity, loneliness and their exploitation in the workplace. The film portrayed women as a community, never in the company of men outside of the family unit and primarily engaged in suitable work, as mothers, nurses, wives and, occasionally, running the husband's business in his absence. Secondly, for women, these films offered acceptable role models, at a time when the cinema had for so many years provided men with a plethora of male role models. Nazi propagandists afforded men much help on the road to becoming 'a good National Socialist' and, as the war intensified and cinema became more popular, women increasingly looked to film in search of suitable direction. With the identification of women as the primary wartime audience, film between 1940 and 1942 adjusted itself to address the plight women were facing on a daily basis

on the home front or provide them with a means of escapism. It has been said that many women in Germany in the 1940s lived their life through the cinema, as it was not possible to conduct a normal existence outside of it. Through *Wunschkonzert*, women discovered the universality of suffering through the separation of Inge and Herbert and in the grief of Frau Schwarzkopf. The duality of this propaganda message should be emphasised. Firstly, its appeal was gender specific and through these portrayals both genders' psychological needs are catered for. Secondly, the piece functions on the principles of generality and individuality. Scenes stressing the glory of war as a concept are supplemented with personal tales of how war effects individual lives and relationships, making the situation and indeed the eventual sacrifice and victory more personal. As the SD, TKB and the RPL reports show, a film purely concerning the glory of a faceless Luftwaffe squadron did not stimulate the public into action. It was the personal, human touch which inspired and supported, affording a feeling of unity on a different, and one could argue, more successful, level to overt political or military propaganda. This goes some way to explaining the popularity and importance of the NS *Spielfilm* [Feature Film]. It has already been noted that, in the later stages of the War, cinema audiences were avoiding the newsreel screenings. *Wunschkonzert* was able to use this newsreel material in the guise of entertainment. The target audience was being reached without their knowledge.

If the propagandistic success of the film *can* be attributed to the identification of the target audience with the characters, suitable role models must be provided: the patient sweetheart, the war workers and the mothers, whose role in particular is highlighted by *Filmwelt* on 13 September 1940: '[Over the radio] a soldier at the front (Malte Jaeger) receives the great and happy news, that his small, delicate wife (Vera Hartegg) has given him a son. A lonely mother (Elise Auslinger) hears the favourite song of her son, a young musician (Walter Ladengast), who has been killed.'⁵⁶ The main female protagonist is Inge, whose relationship with the airman Herbert Koch is the fictional centrepiece of the film. In the same way as Inge in *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort*, she is happy to wait for Herbert, even when she does not hear a word from him for three years. Inge is warned of the pains of wartime separation by her Aunt Eichhorn, who remembers that she too was in a similar situation; the soldier in question never contacted her again. On the young couple's separation, Aunt Eichhorn's words ring in Inge's head, and yet despite this additional warning, she continues to wait for Herbert, excluding other suitors (such as Helmut Winkler, her childhood friend). Inge does not seem to be allotted any other role in the film outside of the task of 'waiting', receiving and sending letters (Figure 6)⁵⁷ and as an integral part of her familial unit.

According to Joe Hembus in *Klassiker des deutschen Tonfilms* (German Sound Film Classics), this was an essential component of the ideal war woman:

**TO VIEW THIS FIGURE PLEASE REFER
TO THE PRINTED EDITION**

Figure 6. Inge receives a letter, whilst waiting for the return of Herbert

a fighter for the Fatherland is always the brave small everyday woman. She must be sporty, firm and healthy. Her face; natural, fresh, charming, relaxed and genuine – in short – the comrade in which one can believe and trust – Ilse Werner. One is expected to be this type of woman, staying loyal for three years to a man who she hardly knows or has heard a word from.⁵⁸

Women were expected to wait whilst men were on military duty. The emotional relationship was to be subservient to the national duty. The theme tune of the film, ‘When the ship piano plays’, demonstrates this:

Every man yearns for his home,
which he will one day see again,
And his little girl, who wishes that he was there,
who kissed him so passionately at home.
He looks out to the wide sea,
where the homeland is far away . . .
we are always happy to come to land,
but after a few days we must move on,
and many a beautiful child will cry at home.

We will never sleep on land,
but one day we will be old and tired,
And we will stand and dream in some port,
and softly hum our song.⁵⁹

There are no signs of remorse for the sailors in having to leave their sweethearts behind, as duty overrides personal feelings. Women must be content to allow their emotional needs to be minimised and should not jeopardise the military duty their men have to perform. The consequences of interference could result in the man choosing duty over love, as demonstrated in *Die große Liebe* (1942), which will be discussed shortly. In both *Wunschkonzert* and *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort* (1937), this pattern of expected female behaviour is adhered to and presented as the 'norm'.

One of the most difficult issues dealt with in *Wunschkonzert* is the mother's reaction to the death of her son. The bravery and solidity of the mother figure in the film represents the idealistic acceptance of death.⁶⁰ In this scene, which was considered to be one of the most effective and poignant by the SD report,⁶¹ the heroic suffering of Frau Schwarzkopf links her to the community, who share in her pain through the radio:

Heinz Goedecke: A mother called. Her son was killed in action. His comrades sent his identity badge and belongings to his mother. She called us to say, 'I have the note book of my darling son here. On the final page, he wrote that there was a song he loved so much. Its name is, "Goodnight Mother." Can I hear it again?' Wilhelm Strienz: [Sings] Goodnight mother, goodnight. You thought of me with all your might. You worried so much about your boy. At night, you sang him a lullaby. [The camera switches between the studio and the mother's home radio, which is next to a picture of her son] Goodnight mother, goodnight. I caused you so much worry and fright. You forgave me. You watched over me. Goodnight mother, Goodnight!

The strength of the mother in her grief is also a theme developed in the 1941 militaristic war production, *Stukas* (Dive-Bombers, Karl Ritter, 1941), in which one comrade receives a letter from the mother of a dead colleague and remarks, 'when a mother takes it like that, death is so unimportant'. The mother, who releases her son for war duty, knowing of the possible outcome, is accorded heroic status and sympathy from the community. The scene also portrays 'realism', with the death of a son as a key element of the film. The image, filmed for the 1940 production, became increasingly rare, as the demand for escapism superseded the demand for contemporary and 'realistic' plots.

But for one life lost, another is created and this is also stressed by Borsody. Frau Friederich bears her husband a son and the news is conveyed to him via the

Request Concert. The message is that life continues and, in amongst the grief and suffering, joy can be found. The mother here is representative of the home, new life, hope and the future. Hence, in *Wunschkonzert*, ‘the protectress and the sufferer are united in one and the same person,’⁶² the mother. ‘Patriarchy secures its dominance under fascism in the form of filiarchy,’⁶³ and the powerful bond between mother and son, with which many women in the audience would have identified, is strongly emphasised in Borsody’s 1940 production.

Women were also depicted assuming male roles in society, in the absence of their husbands and sons. Frau Hammer runs her husband’s bakery and Frau Kramer becomes a wartime butcher. Marc Silberman in *German Cinema. Texts in Context*, notes that female wartime professions were subject to natural limitations: ‘the competent, “manly” woman also has a place in this community, and even more so if her male qualities are only a mask’.⁶⁴ These roles are not allotted to the idealistic German woman, such as Inge, but are assigned to the older, brassier women such as Frau Hammer and Frau Kramer in *Wunschkonzert* and Frau Hartmann in *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort*. All three women lose their ‘masculinity’ and their newly found profession on the return of their male counterpart.

The main element of the film, however, is the merging of these two separated, gender specific communities. This is achieved in the film through the Request Concert. Throughout the film, couples and families, who are conducting a separate existence, are united via the medium of radio. Often during the musical or comedic performances, the camera darts between the performer, the men at the front and the women at home or in the workplace, all tuned into the same programme. In the film, Heinz Goedecke’s introduction to the Request Concert stressed this unifying process: ‘Here is the Greater German Radio. Dear soldiers, dear listeners in the homeland, dear friends from the border areas, the eighth request concert for the army kicks off with the great Flying March.’ The compilation scenes during the Request Concert combine images linking home to the front lines, portraying each gender alternately and displaying each aspect of war: mothers sewing, men in their barracks, a girl at a desk writing a letter with the picture of her sweetheart at her side, men at the airfield preparing for take-off, the Panzer division preparing for manoeuvres, a grandma sitting quietly with her grandchildren, a grieving mother knitting dressed in black and wearing her son’s Iron Cross, men relaxing in their army accommodation, a mother quietly sitting and stroking her baby’s head. On the release of the film, *Filmwelt* reported that, ‘the film performs a special duty . . . it becomes an experience of the heart’.⁶⁵ In this expression of emotions and separation, comfort is derived through a radio connection, producing the most significant message of the film: the building of a valuable bridge between home and front.

In its production stages, the film became, according to Hippler, ‘Goebbels’ “wanted child”. He worked on the script, wrote the dialogue and had individual

singers and musicians in mind, who had great performances to offer.⁶⁶ Goebbels' input, and delight with the finished product, is noted in his diary entry of 31 December 1940:

Premiere of *Wunschkonzert* in the Ufa Palast am Zoo. Great occasion. The film received tumultuous applause. I am so happy about it, because the idea came from me. Yet again, we have created [something] good. Everyone likes the extraordinarily popular characters in the film. It will ignite the whole German public. I stayed for a few moments with the artists, who were all overjoyed with their success.⁶⁷

The success of the film was confirmed in Sander's report on youth reception. *Wunschkonzert* was voted eleventh most popular film made between 1933 and 1944.⁶⁸ As explained earlier, Sander's survey of 2,321 questionnaires comprised a cross-section of youth from various regions and age groups.⁶⁹ The following table, taken from Sander's 1944 thesis, noted the reasons why *Wunschkonzert* was so popular (left-hand column), and the age and gender groups each plot development appealed to:

Theme	10–13 yrs.		14–17 yrs.		Over 18	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Taken from real life, true to life	0%	5%	9%	13%	40%	12%
Character of leading men	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Heroism, bravery and steadfast nature	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	2%
Artistically and culturally valuable	0%	0%	0%	2%	20%	0%

The fact that the film dealt with a 'true to life' theme seems to be the most popular response in the over-18 category, supporting the thesis that *Wunschkonzert*'s appeal lay in the fact that it addressed a contemporary theme, giving moral support to the sections of the community who most needed it. The reports from rural regions also noted that the film received a favourable response.⁷⁰ These responses, from youth and rural sectors of the population, combined with the box office figures, noted the success of von Borsody's film. In 1940, when the War was in its early, and for the Nazis, most successful, days, *Wunschkonzert* presented a contemporary theme which proved digestible. The table above noted that virtually all the responses commented that the film's appeal lay in its portrayal of the contemporary, and

‘realistic’, plot. By 1942, however, after the invasion of the Soviet Union, ‘realism’ became unappealing to the German cinema audience.⁷¹

Wunschkonzert received much critical and propagandistic acclaim, in addition to high box office receipts. In a 1941 speech, Goebbels praised the German film industry for its recent productions, stressing their political importance to the NS cause:

The NS state considers its first duty to infuse new impulses into art which shall deepen the public understanding of the greatness of our time. In the domain of film, the directive is the most important encouragement and stimulus to creation . . . Among recent films *Wunschkonzert*, *Bismarck*, *Jud Süß*, *Ohm Krüger*, *Ich klage an* and *Heimkehr* were made on official orders and I must pay German film artists the compliment of saying that they tackled these jobs with the greatest enthusiasm.⁷²

Rather than ‘tackling’ their task with ‘enthusiasm’ however, post-war interrogation suggests that force was applied to actors to appear in such films, although post-1945 statements should be treated with caution. Marit Barnek, in testifying for Werner on a charge of collaboration, noted that pressure was applied to Werner to play Inge Wagner in *Wunschkonzert*: ‘It is known to me that she refused employment, on political grounds, having read film manuscripts, and repeatedly declined these roles until she was forced to accept them by the Propaganda Ministry (in particular *Wunschkonzert*). Once she was even forced by the RKK to pay a fine of RM 1000 for “undesirable behaviour.”’⁷³ This last point is confirmed by the actual fine order, issued by the RKK, which states that Werner offended ‘against your principle duties as somebody working in the services of Culture and, at the same time, you have not followed . . . instructions’. A fine of RM 1000, as claimed, was imposed.⁷⁴ Eta Marten, also testifying for Werner, confirms the pressure placed on actors to work for the RMVP. Marten overheard Werner talking on the Berlin-Hamburg express. She recalls, ‘she very much complained about German films which, by request of the Minister of Propaganda, Goebbels, were given a distilled and strong tendency and thus made it a torture for any serious actor to act in them’.⁷⁵ Werner’s own testimony went further and argued that,

we artists always stood with one foot in the grave. One now accuses me of being a Nazi artist. I made a name in Germany. Perhaps one had interests there, to earn myself some money . . . Once I came back from Switzerland, I had to go straight to see Goebbels. Goebbels said to me that he had a list of people, my parents and relatives. He said, ‘you can either make films or they will go to a place that you could not even begin to imagine.’ From this moment on, I had to protect my parents. I tried [to ensure] that at least none of my relatives would go to a KZ (Concentration Camp) and that they survived. From this time onwards, I lived under pressure.⁷⁶

This conversation took place, according to Werner's memoirs, after her return from Switzerland and her abortive attempt to escape her Ufa contract and duties to the Reich, placing it in December 1941, after the filming of *Wunschkonzert*.⁷⁷ The RFK noted that Werner even tried to marry an American to escape her duties under their auspices,⁷⁸ a fact which is confirmed by Carl Opitz, testifying for Werner in March 1946,⁷⁹ and by Werner's own memoirs. These could be the exaggerated protestations of an actress under the pressure of the post-war stigmatisation of collaboration with the Nazi regime. At one point in the interview, Werner claims that she 'made no fees',⁸⁰ and yet RKK files clearly show that she earned between RM 8,500 at the beginning of her career (*Frau Sixta*, Gustav Ucicky, 1938) and RM 40,000 in 1943–4 (*Die Große Freiheit Nr. 7*, The Great Freedom No. 7, Helmut Käutner, 1943). She made RM 17,000 for the film *Wunschkonzert*.⁸¹ Werner was blacklisted by George Freimarck, Chief of Intelligence, on 22 March 1946, stressing that 'she enjoyed much favour under the Nazi regime and could be deemed to have been, "pro-nazi" to make a career for herself'. The report even suggested that she was 'the protected child of the Propaganda Ministry'.⁸² Perhaps as a result of pressure from the RMVP, perhaps as a desire to continue her career, Werner continued to make films for the Reich.

***Auf Wiedersehen Franziska* (Goodbye Franziska, Helmut Käutner, 1941)**

Marianne Hoppe, who in the post-war enquiries was judged to be 'violently Nazi',⁸³ and was closely associated with the NSDAP, contributed to the portrayals of war women, through the 1941 production, *Auf Wiedersehen Franziska*, for which she was paid RM 40,000.⁸⁴ Directed by Helmut Käutner, the film dealt with just one main theme – separation. It tracks the course of Franziska Tiemann and her troublesome separation from the man she loves, Michael Reisinger, a newsreel reporter. Michael's job requires him to travel around the world collecting news items. After just one day together, Franziska agrees to spend the night with Michael, only to find that he is due to depart the next morning. Thinking that their night together was meaningless for Michael, Franziska decides to make a life in the city, as a 'modern woman'.⁸⁵ A year passes. By chance, Michael and Franziska meet in Berlin. Once again, Michael's stay is brief: only a few hours. Franziska accompanies Michael to the station for another emotional farewell. On Michael's wish, Franziska moves back to her small home village to await his return and reorganise what is to become their family home. Franziska receives a letter from Michael, informing her that he will return in four months' time. He breaks his promise, following his career. Michael receives a telegram, stating that Franziska has given birth to a baby boy. He returns to marry Franziska and support his family. But, when his friend, Buck, comes to visit, Michael knows that he must pursue

his work. Franziska lets him go. Shortly after, she gives birth to a baby girl and Michael returns: this time only for eighteen hours. When Buck becomes fatally wounded whilst reporting a story, Michael reviews his commitments. Franziska, meanwhile, has been considering divorce, due to Michael's lengthy absences. Michael finally discovers that his true mission in life is to be with his family and leaves his employment. However, war is to separate the couple once again. Michael receives his call-up papers, as a PK reporter. This time, Franziska urges him to go, stressing that this is not work: it is his duty. She cancels the divorce action and accompanies Michael to the station, fully in support of his new task and ready to accept necessary separation.

Franziska's life as an individual is denied through her commitment to Michael, relating the female role in the war-film genre once again to the contention that women's lives revolved around their male counterparts. The film was intended to show the heroism of enduring an enforced separation and advance Franziska as the epitome of devotion and loyalty. Through Franziska, Michael also makes a journey from the internationalism of journalism to the appreciation of the homeland. For Michael and for the audience, Franziska represents the homeland.

After her initial meeting with Michael, Franziska conducts a foray into the world of 'the modern woman'. She moves away from the small town to the metropolis of Berlin, explaining to her father that 'It is all for me. For me alone. It has nothing to do with this man. I don't love him. It will be an adventure, nothing more than that. I want to find out what it means to live and what life can be like.' When Michael returns, however, after one year, she abandons her career as an artist and her own home immediately. She is re-established as the home figure. Both protagonists embark on an emotional journey. Michael discovers the true meaning of love, family and home. At first, he is opposed to the concept of marriage and home, embracing his love of travel and the world. When he requests leave to go and marry Franziska, he is advised by his American employer, 'Don't make such a stupid mistake . . . this little love affair could end your career. You can get "love's little gifts" anywhere, but marriage?' When he returns home to his newly created family, a boy, a wife and a home, the thought of work still occupies him, remarking that, 'I cannot and will not [stay here]. Work is work.' With his dying breath, his colleague Buck advises him to return to Franziska and consider the 'important things in life': his wife, his baby and his home.

Franziska too finds coping with separation, and what becomes effectively single motherhood, difficult. She senses Michael's unhappiness being trapped at home and tells him to persevere with his work, appearing to support and condone his task in journalism. Using her feminine perception, Franziska senses that Michael yearns for his work, and sacrifices her own personal feelings, telling him to resume his career:

Michi, come to me. Sit here quietly for a moment. You can speak to me over the phone and chat with me, but you can't work here. It is alright when you say to me, 'I cannot live here anymore'. [He tells her that he has a commission with the New York picture Corporation] I know. I didn't know for sure, but I felt it.

She is constantly saying goodbye to Michael and once again, without complaint, she sends him to report in China. Franziska then decides to transform a negative emotion into a virtue. When her son is unable to sleep because he feels lonely, she tells him, 'Being alone makes you strong,' and the audience feels that this is more a comment on her own personal situation than a comfort for her son. In the final stages of the film, Franziska assumes the traditional role of the war wife, happily accepting and encouraging her husband's departure for the front line. In a patriotic finale, Franziska tells Michael that this separation is for the right reason: duty to the Fatherland. The final words of the film, 'Goodbye, Michael,' underline Franziska's courage, support and her optimism for the future. Franziska is pulled away from her life as 'a modern woman' and assumes the traditional role as a mother and wife, who has learned to accept the wishes and absence of her husband. Her two independent actions in the film, the move to Berlin and the proposed divorce, are silenced by the return of Michael, and Franziska rejects them in favour of an existence revolving around her husband. Franziska's dissatisfaction with Michael's absence gradually ebbs away in the course of the film, resulting in her final encouragement for Michael to depart for the front line, leaving her alone, in the midst of war, with two children to raise. For a woman in the Reich, this was the ultimate expression of sacrifice and heroism, placing the duty of her husband to the German Nation over her own personal pain and solitude.

In order to re-enforce the sanctity of Franziska, Käutner introduces the character of Helen Phillips, a female colleague of Michael. Her un-Germanic name suggests that she is to be juxtaposed with the idealistic Franziska Tiemann. The Ufa publicity booklet for the 1941 production states that Helen 'hunts sensationalism both in her private life and in her profession. She has the qualifications for it too; Helen is pretty, well dressed . . . , without a care and worldly wise.'⁸⁶ The international career woman, as opposed to the home-loving mother, is portrayed as a seductress, who targets Michael as her next victim. The sexual initiative is taken by Helen. The career woman, her sexuality and her internationalism are clearly defined in the film, and images connected with Helen and Franziska alternate between a bar in the Far East and the mother caring for her children. With these scenes appearing one after the other in quick succession, the comparison between the two female characters is apparent.

Aufwiedersehen Franziska cost RM 1,006,000 to produce (RM 101,000 more than *Wunschkonzert*, although production costs rose during 1940/1). It did not enjoy the success of the earlier production, grossing only RM 3,350,000 in box

office receipts (making RM 3,850,000 less than *Wunschkonzert* and RM 3,050,000 less than the other big war film of 1941, *Annelie*.)⁸⁷ Moreover, it did not gain popular support within the Party and, in some quarters, it actively raised opposition. The contentious issue was the inclusion of an unmarried mother. In the film, Franziska had stayed at Michael's house for the night after a brief encounter on the same day. As a result of their second meeting, Franziska became pregnant, outside of marriage. Deputy *Gauleiter* Trautmann of Magdeburg contacted the RFK on 11 October 1941, stating that 'the film *Aufwiedersehen Franziska* in itself has been generally well received . . . the film was certainly above average but the racial political division of the party would make the following adjustments'.⁸⁸ Trautmann objected to a girl from an 'ordinary family being mixed up with strange people',⁸⁹ noting that she had no 'inhibitions' in staying with Michael, after having met him that very day. The fact that Franziska conceives and gives birth to a child outside of marriage to a man she hardly knows alarmed Trautmann and the racial political division. He noted, 'from this standpoint, one must naturally raise objections to it. We endeavour to preserve the cleanliness of our growing youth and then this film! The low level of morals in young girls today is already so alarming! The film is considered to be a glorification of a bad example.'⁹⁰ Trautmann's objections were duly noted, but the scenes were never removed from the film.

***Die große Liebe* (The Great Love, Rolf Hansen, 1942)**

Despite the obvious moral implications of the film, *Auf Wiedersehen Franziska* was not the only film to raise problems relating to sexuality and warfare. Zarah Leander's 1942 war epic, *Die große Liebe* dealt with similar issues and was criticised accordingly. The film, directed in 1942 by Rolf Hansen and starring Zarah Leander, was produced at a militarily crucial time. The Reich was now entering its fourth year of war and undertaking the fateful Operation Barbarossa. The initial enthusiasm, which generated support for films such as *Wunschkonzert*, was declining. The themes of the 1942 production *should* have made the propaganda message a resounding success: devotion of the pilot, Paul Wendlandt, to the Führer and to Germany, support, eventual submission to and acceptance of Paul's task by Hanna Holberg, the sense of comradeship, the promotion of militarism and the task that was being realised by the National Socialist war in Europe.

Die große Liebe portrays a wartime relationship between an air force officer, Paul Wendlandt, and a famous singer, Hanna Holberg. Wendlandt and a colleague visit Berlin on business and decide to see Holberg perform. Wendlandt approaches the star after her show and accompanies her to a party, inciting the jealousy of Holberg's composer and friend, Alfred Ruchnitsky. The composer is in love with Hanna, but his affection is unrequited. Wendlandt and Holberg are caught in a

bombing raid, after which they return to her apartment where they spend the night together. Paul leaves early in the morning, without explanation to Hanna. Three weeks pass and the couple are reunited. Paul tells Hanna his profession and explains his absence. Paul is transferred to France, but, before leaving, he proposes to Hanna. She accepts. The wedding preparations are made hastily. However, the evening before the ceremony is due to take place, Paul is recalled to the air force. The wedding date is postponed. Hanna occupies herself with a performance in Rome. The couple prepare to marry, but once again, Paul receives a telegram. Hanna begs him to ignore it and stay. He refuses, placing his comrades above his future wife. They part without reaching a compromise. Shortly after, Hanna hears that Paul is injured. She realises her mistake and rushes to be with him. She agrees to be devoted to Paul and his career.

The opening representation of the pilot, Paul Wendlandt, confirms his character for the plot development. He refuses to abandon his plane, making a crash landing and surviving. From this selfless act, it is apparent that Wendlandt is dedicated to his mission, refusing to desert, even if it were to cost him his life. Later, he and his comrade are ordered to Berlin and, whilst they are there, they see Hanna Holberg perform her song, '*Mein Leben für die Liebe*'. Wendlandt tries to meet Holberg, having been captivated by her beauty, as are many others in the film, such as the trapeze artist, Alfred Vanloo and the composer, Alex Ruchnitsky, who is devoted to Holberg and attempts throughout the film to arrange divorce from his current wife in order to be with Hanna. Alex, however, cannot compete with the heroism, bravery and masculinity of Paul. These physical characteristics distinguish Paul from Alex. Alex is an artist rather than a fighter, making him weak and insecure around Hanna. This portrayal of the composer is necessary in order to glorify the heroism of the military, ensuring that eventually Wendlandt, the officer, and not Alex, the artist, wins the heart of the singer. Alex recognises his 'faults', telling Hanna, 'You must know what I feel for you, Hanna! What you mean to me! I know what you think. I'm a typical half-baked Don Juan, with too little energy according to you.'

Wendlandt follows Holberg to a party. He eventually walks her home:

Paul: If I'm lucky, you'll ask me in.

Hanna: I won't! [The air-raid sirens sound] Oh those awful people!

Paul: Are they really so awful? [He laughs]

Hanna is obliged to invite Paul in and they are forced to retreat to the basement with the rest of the block for the duration of the air raid. Hanna has received some real coffee from an admirer. Such a commodity was scarce in wartime and yet Paul shares the coffee with the whole apartment block, demonstrating that, in a wartime situation, comradeship is an essential quality which the *Volk* is expected

to possess. Paul heralds the National Socialist principle of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, as he does throughout the film:

Man: You can keep that malt stuff!

Paul: It is real coffee! [He distributes the coffee, giving some to everyone]

Käthe: Well, are we a *Volksgemeinschaft* or not?

Wendlandt embodies the principles of Nazism. He is devoted to his unit to the detriment of his personal relationships. He is brave and courageous: a man of action, rather than one of thoughts. He enacts the principles of the *Volksgemeinschaft* in the basement and should, therefore, be seen as the militaristic *idealtypus* of the 1942 production.

After hearing the air-raid sirens signal the all clear, Holberg and Wendlandt leave the basement. They return to Hanna's apartment. They both close the door at the same time, their hands brushing. They kiss. This is followed by dramatic music, accompanying Paul's departure from Berlin the following morning. This scene generated some criticism of the film. Paul, a Luftwaffe officer, had pre-marital sexual relations with Hanna. The SHAEF report [Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force post-war report on National Socialist film production] accused the film of glorifying 'illegitimate sex relationships'.⁹¹ Pre-marital sexual relationships appear as themes in both *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort* (1937) (in Hellwig's relationship) and *Auf Wiedersehen Franziska* (1941). National Socialist feature films were not intended to dictate sexual morality of single people and the Reich leadership wavered between the condemnation of sexual freedom and a *laissez-faire* attitude towards sexual relations. Films of the Reich encouraged wartime fidelity, but promoted free sexual relations between single Aryan parties, for which the RMVP received much criticism from moral campaigners. The 'moral code' applied to single relationships transcended gender barriers. Male and female characters were criticised alike. Franziska and Hanna Holberg were condemned for their behaviour by both the authorities and the public, as was Paul Wendlandt for acting in a manner unbecoming for a Luftwaffe Lieutenant. This 'code' differed in the films of the Reich where adultery and racial sexual relations were concerned (to be discussed later). In this respect, Wendlandt's character remains untarnished.

The character of Holberg is the embodiment of elements deemed desirable and, paradoxically, undesirable in the home-front woman. She is both an advocate of the position women should take in war and yet she displays considerable jealousy. She has to undergo a metamorphosis in front of the camera, transforming herself from a self-seeking woman into one devoted to her husband and his mission. The decision Hanna takes at the end of the film in effect transformed her character from a jealous lover to a dutiful spouse. The pattern of this jealousy and the trauma of separation should be explored. This was perhaps one of the more pressing matters

in 1942 and *Die große Liebe* was intended to revitalise a flagging female population, who were, in the third year of war, tiring of solitude and separation. The importance of their mission had to be established and their faith in the War restored. The first instance of separation is after the initial liaison, when Wendlandt leaves without telling Holberg the reason for his hasty departure:

Etzdorf: Didn't you tell her you were a pilot?

Paul: No . . . I didn't want to tell her. I leave tomorrow. I can't stand a woman crying. I don't even know if we'll meet again.

The uncertainty of a pilot's life is portrayed and his callous dismissal of emotion is noted. In contrast to this cold-heartedness, Holberg is seen to be frantic over the whereabouts of her lover. She hears nothing from him for three weeks and they are reunited, after he reveals the reason for his silence.

One of the key aspects of the film is the separation of Hanna and Paul and how difficult and painful this division is for both of them, especially for Hanna. Various lines from the film illustrate this point:

Hanna: He spent three days with me four weeks ago. Since then I've been living on his letters.

Käthe: She's unhappy all the time. Always waiting and waiting for nothing.

Paul: You can't imagine how important it is to spend just one day with the one you love!

All three comments express the brevity of their time together and the special nature of their relationship. The film's message was intended to calm the fears of the wartime, and predominantly female, audience. It reassured them that their memory was dear to the heart of their menfolk, who were away performing their heroic duty for Germany. These lengthy separations were compensated when soldiers took leave, as the reunions were all the more special for being brief. The film develops the idea of the quality, not quantity, of time. In the 1942 production, little sympathy is allotted to Leander, presented as being selfish and unreasonable, in pleading with Wendlandt to stay. Hanna actively attempts to dissuade Paul from performing his duty alongside his comrades:

[Paul hears from a comrade that he will soon be called to rejoin his men. He takes the decision to join them earlier than required, thus leaving Hanna before their wedding] (Figure 7)⁹²

Hanna: I can't bear it, Paul! Wait until you are called.

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Figure 7. Paul tells Hanna that he must leave. BAFA 6214⁹²

Paul: I want to get back to my comrades! Don't stop me performing my duties. I thought you knew about being an officer's wife! Do you have anything to say to me?

Hanna: No! [He leaves]

Paul chooses duty over love. He rejects emotions and replaces them with honour. Paul repudiates Hanna and, in doing so, risks their relationship. He does this without hesitation and chooses the higher and worldly principles of duty, honour, bravery and devotion to the Führer over a more personal and individual sentiment. Once again the emotions of the female character are subservient to masculine, honourable virtues. Hanna is portrayed as being at fault and sympathy is transferred to Wendlandt, who faces battle in Russia without the support of his fiancée. (Figure 8)⁸³ This jealousy was regarded as being detrimental to military performance and was strongly discouraged. The US Committee for National Morale, in its psychological portrait of German war propaganda techniques, asserted that female jealousy was one of the key aspects of separation in a wartime situation. The report stated that 'dangerous elements of jealousy and despondency on the part of the woman becomes a problem to both the army and the soldier'.⁹⁴

Hanna represents the female disposition, emphasising the conviction that woman is controlled by selfish, sentimental and emotional feelings. Hanna gains no benefit

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Figure 8. Paul receives a telegram from his Commander⁹³

from obstructionism and plots to prevent Wendlandt performing his duty are only seen as detrimental to their relationship. The female audience was encouraged to abandon sentiments connected with individualism and support the wartime effort with selfless sacrifice, allowing their men to continue performing their duty without hindrance. According to the propagandistic message of the film, if they did attempt obstructionist behaviour, they stood to lose their loved ones completely, as the soldier would always favour his comrade over his lover.

Once Hanna has learned this lesson, she can complete her metamorphosis into the *idealtypus*. The realisation of his mistake is painful but necessary. Eventually, when Wendlandt is injured, she rejects her career and agrees to become his wife, whatever the cost:

Paul: Couldn't we have another go at the wedding? [She agrees]

Hanna: You have three weeks and then?

[A Luftwaffe squadron flies overhead. They both look with admiration to the sky and then look at each other.]

Paul: Yes? [She nods]

The final nod at the end of the film implies that she will now support her husband in his devotion to the war effort. Her role is now defined as being one of support,

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endurance and love. Hanna is presented as having accepted her destiny opposite Paul and is willing to conform to the image of women in Goebbels' Total War scenario, prepared to make 'even the harshest personal sacrifices'.⁹⁵ Her destiny dictates that she must assume this role, as illustrated in the final song of the film;

We have the same star,
your fate is also mine,
You're far away but not too far,
as our souls are intertwined,
I know that a miracle will happen . . .
And I know that we will see each other again.

Described as having achieved 'perfect propaganda methods',⁹⁶ the 1942 film embraced many common themes in Nazi militaristic propaganda. The film was intended to appeal to male soldiers, maintaining their devotion to the war effort and to home front women, enduring the situation and devoting themselves to their men. However, it was clear from Goebbels' diary entry, on 14 May 1942, that the film did not strike him as a great cinematic masterpiece, from the same mould as *Wunschkonzert*:

The new Leander film was screened. It attempts to portray a private matter in the midst of a larger wartime situation and it has, in fact, a fair storyline. The film can make no claim to be of high artistic value, but it will undoubtedly receive a very strong public reaction.⁹⁷

Just nine days later, on 23 May 1942, Goebbels reported that the film had been heavily criticised by the OKW for its portrayal of Officer Wendlandt. Goebbels wrote:

I had a telephone conversation with the Reich Marshal. He complained about the OKW's protest against the new Leander motion picture; this shows an aviator spending a night with a famous singer. The OKW considers itself insulted morally and insists that a Luftwaffe lieutenant wouldn't act in that way. Göring, on the other hand, correctly considers that if a Luftwaffe lieutenant didn't make use of such an opportunity, he simply wouldn't be a Luftwaffe lieutenant. Göring pokes great fun at the sensitiveness of the OKW That's fine grist for my mill, since the OKW creates many difficulties for me anyway in my film work. In this case, we can depend upon Göring as the greater expert on the Luftwaffe and won't have to fear any jurisdictional difficulties.⁹⁸

A.U. Sander's work stresses that the opinion held by the OKW was prevalent in the young population. *Die große Liebe* inspired 103 responses stating that it was an unpopular film.⁹⁹ The 1942 production was voted fifth worst film produced

from 1933–44. Sander's thesis illustrates some negative comments regarding Hansen's film. Firstly, youth protested against the selfish (and *perhaps* the sexual behaviour) of Holberg. The following responses highlight this aspect clearly:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| Zarah Leander doesn't pass as the wife of an officer | (1) |
| An officer's wife does not behave this way | (5) |
| A German woman is supposed to make a soldier's life easier, not harder! | (2) |

The film was seen as unrealistic, as an officer would not choose a jealous and immoral woman as his partner. These comments are an expression against the selfish nature of Hanna Holberg.

By 1942, the theme only served to remind audiences of their plight. It is clear that German youth preferred to view an historical film. Historical films were used to portray a contemporary theme, relevant to life in the Reich and Nazi ideology, whilst managing to distract the audience from the present situation and, therefore, enabling the RMVP to claim that the film was in fact entertainment. The need to escape from war and the current situation was prevalent in the youth questionnaires, which may have been intensified with the continuance of the War.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| The film is set in our time and not before | (1) |
| Concentrated too much on war | (5) |

It was also suggested that actors could not possibly understand war scenarios as they themselves were not truly living it:

- I don't like soldier films produced in our time because I cannot understand how film actors can possibly portray the honourable military life, as none of them have ever fought at the front. (1)

Thirdly, others objected to the love theme and requested less romance:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Deals with a love theme | (58) |
| A love film | (2) |

Youth reacted strongly towards the character of Holberg. Very few responses, in the survey of 2321 young people in the Reich, actually referred to particular films or characters and yet it is possible to locate references to Holberg and the situation presented in the 1942 production. It must be considered that the film was not aimed at youth as much as it was intended for the female wartime audience, who could probably relate to the love theme more than the younger sections of the population. The Sander questionnaire also highlights the dislike of Zarah Leander in *Die große Liebe*.

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Dislike of Leander	(1)
Zarah Leander doesn't pass as the wife of an officer	(1)
Zarah Leander is too old for the role	(1)

Many of Leander's films were used as vehicles for her musical talents. She was said to be the actress who best represented the ideals of the Reich and, as such, she was well paid and well respected in the Nazi hierarchy. Leander's 1942/3 contract, dated 13 October 1942, effectively made her the highest paid performer in the Reich. This contract confirmed that she could expect to receive a payment RM 250,000 for 1942/3 (RM 175,000 to be paid in Reichsmarks and RM 75,000 to be paid in Swedish Kroner.)¹⁰⁰ This is confirmed by her payment for 1943 alone; from 1 April 1943–July 1943, she earned RM 250,000.¹⁰¹ The highest paid male actor of the period was Hans Albers, who earned on average RM 238,666, RM 11,334 less than Leander.¹⁰²

Despite criticism, the film received box office receipts grossing RM 9,000,000, making a profit of RM 4,723,000.¹⁰³ Film criticism did not reflect dissent, due to the controls and restrictions placed on journalism. E. Kraft, writing on the film in *Filmwoche*, stated,

In Zarah Leander's new film, the love and the sorrows of a music hall singer are intertwined with the destiny of an aviator in the war – a situation which sorely tests the sincerity of their sentiments! The director with intelligence and humour, avoids the danger of excessive sentimentality . . . Zarah Leander pours out her hopes and fears and longings in Michael Jary's songs.¹⁰⁴

H.W. Betts in *Der Film* applauded the reality, rejected by youth in Sander's survey, commenting:

our era, one that tests one's fortitude, intermingles destinies and creates problems. The pressure of life, of great struggle and of death render invalid the normal tenets of our hearts and minds. Art cannot be silent about this last fact without negating itself, and, for this reason, this film has chosen to confront a theme of our own time . . . The film reaches the hearts of its audience because its external realism is matched by an inner truth.¹⁰⁵

The RMVP also released the film in the Eastern territories¹⁰⁶ and chose the film to appear as a special presentation at the Berlin Art Week on 31 August 1942, alongside highly regarded films such as Veit Harlan's *Die goldene Stadt* (The Golden Town, Veit Harlan, 1942).¹⁰⁷

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Figure 9. Promotional Poster for Kolberg. BAFA 9122

***Kolberg* (Veit Harlan, 1945)**

1945 saw a retreat to the ‘realism’ which German film had neglected after Hansen’s production. Veit Harlan’s production, *Kolberg*, was intended to reflect war-torn Germany and reassure Germany that, whilst the military picture was bleak, the population should continue to fight against the odds. If the battle was lost, the message was to be conveyed that the willingness to sacrifice everything for the homeland was in itself a form of victory. This necessitated particularly strong female characters in order to target the female home front audience. The analysis of this film will only concentrate on the scenes in which the female characters play a main role, as the film was intended primarily as a masculine film, as evidenced by Goebbels’ diary entries. The main female protagonist, Maria, was played by Kristina Söderbaum, Harlan’s wife.¹⁰⁸ Söderbaum had a sense of foreboding when her husband was commissioned by Goebbels to make the film in 1943. She wrote in her diary on 5 October 1943, ‘We received the dreadful news that Veit must make *Kolberg*. *Hic incipit tragoedia*. What are we to do?’¹⁰⁹ Harlan received the commission on 1 June 1943. Goebbels wrote to Harlan personally stating,

Herewith I charge you to make the great film *Kolberg*. The task of this film should be to make an example of the town which gives its name to the title and portray that a unified home and front . . . can overcome any hindrance. I authorise you to call upon all departments of the army, state and party and to ask for our help and support, as far as necessary.¹¹⁰

The film took on great importance and was intended as Goebbels’ legacy, to be viewed after the inevitable fall of the Reich. On 17 April 1945, Goebbels discussed *Kolberg* with his aides, stating emphatically:

Gentlemen, in a hundred years’ time they will be showing another fine colour film describing the terrible days we are living through. Don’t you want to play a part in this film, to be brought back to life in a hundred years’ time? Everybody now has the chance to choose a part which he will play in the film a hundred years hence. I can assure you it will be a fine and elevating picture. And for the sake of this prospect, it is worth standing fast. Hold out now so that a hundred years hence the audience does not hoot and whistle when you appear on the screen.¹¹¹

The bolstering of the home front was a crucial aspect of this legacy, with female characters of primary importance. The film was intended to demonstrate to the female audience that, with patience and fortitude, they too could play a part in the ultimate victory of the German nation. Hence, in 1945, the image of the female protagonist of the war films of the Third Reich underwent a transformation, no

longer waiting at home for the return of her husband or sweetheart, but playing an active part in the defence of the *Heimat*. She manifested herself in the form of Maria, the main female character in the film.

The film opens to the song *Deutsches Lied*, the lyrics indicative of the current situation in Germany, 'The fate of the world will depend on the war to pass. All will be decided, the die cast. The people rise, the people rise, now the storm will break.' The setting for the opening scene is 1813, the invasion of Napoleon. Once again, the RMVP sought to portray a contemporary theme through historical parallel, relying on its subtle, but efficacious tendencies as a genre. King Friedrich Wilhelm III faces battle, believing that he does not need the support of the people. One of his generals, Gneisenau, was present at the time of the Kolberg rebellion of 1806 to 1807. He reminds the king that 'the citizens saved Prussia. The citizen did not surrender. Nettelbeck's fighting citizens, the people of Kolberg.' The film then regresses to the year 1806, when news of the fall of Jena and Auerstedt reached the small town of Kolberg. Kolberg is soon surrounded by French forces. The story quickly moves to the battle for Kolberg, with the town's popular leader, Nettelbeck, assuming command alongside Gneisenau and Schill, Maria's love interest in the film. Nettelbeck intends to establish a 'people's army', the equivalent to the *Volksturm*, in order to work alongside Gneisenau, Schill and their troops. In the course of the film, incredible hardships are endured. The loss of life in battle is tremendous, including Maria's father, Werner. Maria is unable to pursue a love affair with Schill, who, whilst he loves her, states, 'I will never marry a woman in my entire life. I am married to the war.' All thoughts of love are turned into passion for the defence of the town, and Maria plays an active part in this defence. Eventually, Maria is sent to see the King in Potsdam to plead for help. The town, now under heavy bombardment from French troops, is resilient and brave. Contrary to historical reality, the town resists invasion and the French troops are repelled. The sacrifices were numerous but eventually victory was achieved by the resistance in the face of adversity.

Maria becomes a symbol of physical and emotional strength in the 1945 film. When Nettelbeck needs to convey information to the King, he chooses Maria to take the message personally. Schill opposes this decision, but Maria stands firm:

Schill: Young girl, do not go through French enemy lines!

Maria: Not even when it is important? He trusts me more than you.

Schill: You? A little girl?

Maria: When you wanted the farm burnt, you didn't think I was a little girl then!

Maria eventually braves the French troops and is escorted to an audience with the queen. Maria is in awe of the queen, whose benevolence comforts her like a Führer

figure. This is the only all-female scene in the film, demonstrating its primarily masculine theme:

- Maria: The people of Kolberg would rather be buried in ruins than be unfaithful to King and country . . . the citizens of Kolberg want to be a shining example to the other citizens of Prussia.
- Queen: What do you bring from Kolberg? Speak.
- Maria: [In awe] Your Majesty, I . . . [She cries]
- Queen: Come here. Tell me what's on your mind.
- Maria: I can't.
- Queen: I have news sent daily from Kolberg. You can be proud of your town. [Maria gives Nettelbeck's letter to the queen] You want me to give something to the king? I'll give the letter to the king today. I promise you. Thus I embrace Prussia and Kolberg. Four jewels are left in our crown. Kolberg is one of them.

Maria successfully petitions the court and plays her part in the defence of Kolberg. On her return, she is quizzed about her mission by Nettelbeck, who re-emphasises that, despite being an integral part of the war effort, Maria has not lost her femininity:

- Nettelbeck: How did you get past them?
- Maria: A woman knows how!
- Nettelbeck: With that sweet little look of yours.

The visit to the court was not Maria's only contribution to the war effort. She is instrumental in the burning of her father's farm in order to prevent it from being captured by the French troops, and plays a part in actually defending the town of Kolberg from the invaders. *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* praised the character of Maria, stating that, 'his niece, Maria, strongly sensed the danger for the Heimat . . . Where help is needed, Maria is the first on the scene.'¹¹² In this last film of the Reich, woman was transformed into an active defender of the homeland, performing physical tasks for the war effort. One facet of the pre-1945 productions, however, remained. Female contribution in the film is defined primarily by sacrifice. In the final scene of the film, Nettelbeck reassures his niece that she too has played her part in the defence of Kolberg, in losing her father and Schill;

- Nettelbeck: You have sacrificed everything, Maria. But it wasn't in vain. Death is part of victory. The greatest always stems from pain. If one bears the pain, one will be great again. You're great, Maria! You did your duty and were not afraid of death. You're victorious too, Maria! You too!

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Figure 10. Nettelbeck comforts Maria in the final scenes. BAFA 9122

Nettelbeck's final speech in the film was primarily aimed at the female audience, who were reassured that all the hardships they had endured from 1942 onwards were not in vain. Many of the women in the Reich, like Maria, lost loved ones. The final speech informed them that death was an integral part of final victory, emphasising the glory of death in the defence of the Fatherland. This message, whilst an important part of the early war films, held special significance for the female audience in 1945, as the Reich was collapsing, like *Kolberg*, around them. The female audience had to be continually reassured of final victory in order to strengthen the home front. Nettelbeck told them, 'At times you think it will break you, but then you must be harder still.' In 1945, when the Allied bombardments intensified and the enemy was rolling into Germany, this message had to be particularly stressed. *Kolberg* informed women that, 'victory could only be achieved through sacrifice and struggle',¹¹³ and this was to be the central theme of Harlan's 1945 film.

Female characters in the film, however, had to be subsidiary ones,¹¹⁴ as male roles were to be of primary importance. Harlan was under instruction from Goebbels not to over-emphasise the female role in the defence of *Kolberg*, stating in his diary on 6 June 1943:

Unfortunately Harlan has, as is often the case with him, made a Söderbaum film out of a Nettelbeck film. In particular, a girl Maria, and not Nettelbeck, is the central point of the whole plot, and Söderbaum, his wife, has naturally been chosen for this role. This will make much trouble. Harlan must be dissuaded from his proposals in the initial manuscript . . . He must make a '*große König*' film for the winter of 1943/44. Who knows what situation we'll be in then. Then we must order a film which cares for and praises . . . the difficulties of resilience. Women have less to do with such a question than men.¹¹⁵

Goebbels' redirection of the plot away from Maria and towards the character of Nettelbeck was influenced by a selfish motive. Harlan recalled in his memoirs that 'Goebbels saw himself as the character of Nettelbeck. He wanted to make Nettelbeck the great hero, to the detriment of Gneisenau.'¹¹⁶ Goebbels attempted to write himself into Harlan's film, confirming Semmler's previous report of 17 April 1945.

The portrait of a war-torn city was complemented by reality in the production of the film, making filming difficult. Söderbaum recalled, 'I found it ridiculous to be filming when the enemy was coming nearer and nearer. One knew about the war and everything that was happening. Then to stand in front of the camera. I felt like a monkey.'¹¹⁷ The film also reflected the experiences of the falling regime as the actress discovered, stating,

You see at the end of the war . . . we had lost so many friends and everything. And it was for me ridiculous to film for the camera in such a serious time . . . I had a very good friend and . . . when I said goodbye to him, I gave him a cigarette case. I don't know why, but I did, and he went home, and he was killed by a bomb. And for me it was so terrible in this film as some of the next days, I have to play that my father, he was burning out in the house in the war, also in *Kolberg*. And I had to find his cigar case, you see. And all those things are real . . . it was so silly. We could find better things than play a film.¹¹⁸

After many delays in the actual production, Harlan finally emerged with over 90 hours of uncut and, at this stage, uncensored film. The film had cost 8 million RM to produce, eight times the cost of a normal feature film of the war years. The film had employed 6,000 horses and 187,000 troops in the mass battle scenes, taken from the front lines in 1944 to appear in the film. Goebbels' aide, Wilfred von Oven, stated that, 'Goebbels even said to me that it was more important that the soldiers act in this film rather than fight at the front, which was no longer worth doing since we were in the middle of collapse.'¹¹⁹

After submission, the film, naturally, underwent modification at the hands of Goebbels and the censors. The difficulties of Harlan's initial film were pointed out by the Reich Minister. Harlan's agreement to the alterations was confirmed in

a memorandum to Goebbels on 6 December 1944, just over one month before the film's premiere. The choral scenes were removed at the wish of the Minister and textual changes were also approved. Battle scenes were cut, in order to make the film have a more human feel, and the scene where Klaus is confined to the waters was shortened. In accordance with Goebbels' own image as Nettelbeck, the scene in which Gneisenau assumed sole responsibility for the battle was removed. Despite the concession to make the film more human, the female scenes were cut, as Goebbels had requested. The report recommended 'a shortening of the audience scene with Queen Luise, by removing one or two close up shots of Frau v. Meyendorff and Frau Söderbaum.' One scene in particular was cut completely, with the report recommending 'the removal of the birth scenes of the pregnant woman [who gives birth to] the child in the house of the mayor.'¹²⁰ This modification was confirmed by Harlan, stating that Goebbels removed a scene where 'a woman brings a child into the world whilst her house burns and collapses, burying herself and the young child'. Goebbels told Harlan that he considered this to be 'in excessively bad taste.'¹²¹ The death of a young mother appeared to overstep the boundaries of Harlan's 'realistic' portrayal. Such an image of young motherhood and its identification with tragedy could not be portrayed in the final film of the Reich. This could not be the sum of the regime's legacy to its female audience. Queen Luise and in particular Maria were to be the final female images in film under National Socialism, demonstrating bravery and resilience in the face of insurmountable odds.

The images conveyed in *Kolberg* were so crucial to the propaganda campaign to boost home front morale at the time of the collapse of the Reich that the RMVP made every effort for a rapid distribution of the film.¹²² The film was to be immediately distributed to 'all key' areas,¹²³ including those 'affected by air raids.'¹²⁴ On 30 January 1945, the premiere of the film took place simultaneously in Berlin and in the Atlantic Fortress in La Rochelle.¹²⁵ The presence of the actors was obligatory.¹²⁶ Despite reports that the actors were in 'a celebratory mood',¹²⁷ Kristina Söderbaum remembers the event quite differently:

That was terrible! We had to go to the premiere of the film. It was on in two cinemas in Berlin. After the film, I was evacuated, some 300 kilometres from Berlin. But for the film premiere, we had to go back. The house was burned up and everything. And we had to go there. We had to go this long way for the film premiere, on 31 January 1945. And I thought it was ridiculous . . . we were living with a neighbour. They had no windows. We had paper in the windows. We had to sleep with pullovers and all the warm things we had and when I should change, I had to change for evening dress . . . I have to go to a friend for a bath. I said, 'you cannot do that when the war is going on, when you are waiting for all the bombs and you are afraid . . . many people are dying.' I thought it was ridiculous to go to a film premiere.¹²⁸

In such conditions, Goebbels felt that the premiere of the film was all the more important. Goebbels exuded pride in the finished, and highly censored, piece in his diary on 1 December 1944: 'In the evening, viewed the new Harlan colour film, *Kolberg*. It is a true masterwork of directorial art.'¹²⁹ Goebbels arranged a screening for the Military leadership of the Reich,¹³⁰ Göring, Himmler, Admiral Doenitz and General Guderzane¹³¹ and, finally, for Hitler himself who agreed that the film would play an important part in inspiring 'the political leadership in the 6th year of war'.¹³² Goebbels noted that the German people would 'identify with the winning battle', and predicted 'extraordinary success' for the film.¹³³ The Reich collapsed before the film could reach its box office target.

Conclusion

In conclusion, certain strands can be drawn out and images grouped together. The veneration of the mother figure (as a pregnant woman, first-time mother, experienced mother with many children, the release of sons for war service and the grief on their death) becomes a key element in nearly all of the war films, elevating her to heroic status in the fulfilment of her biological 'duty'. The duality of the mother is exploited; she is both protective, loving and caring and yet strong, when she has to endure the loss of a son or husband. The war worker is given a place in the films of the Reich and yet her potential as a career woman is never highlighted. The war worker relinquishes employment on the return of the men. If she does not, like Vera Georgi in *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort* or Helen Phillips in *Auf Wiedersehen Franziska*, she is stigmatised and left alone without a husband, lover or sweetheart. Duty to the husband or sweetheart is also emphasised in the films and women are expected to 'wait' for the return of their men and endure the difficulties of wartime separation with courage and steadfast loyalty. In return, men must suppress emotion and continue their duties with no thought to an individual and sentimental existence. Personal feelings of love are negated by the higher notions of duty, honour and patriotism. All these issues have been raised in the course of the above discussion.

The course of the war films changed direction, as the public became increasingly disaffected in the latter stages of the War. The popularity of *Wunschkonzert* can be attributed to the optimism of the Reich in 1940. The film portrayed a contemporary theme, which was one of the appealing features of the production according to the youth survey. It sentimentalised the war scenario, touching on 'realism'. The later productions, *Auf Wiedersehen Franziska* and *Die große Liebe*, concentrated on the difficulties of separation, with which the female audience could identify. They found less enjoyment in these images, as the images themselves became all too real. Both films attempted forays into the concept of wartime morality, a subject which appeared to be unpalatable for the OKW and the Racial Office in their propaganda attempts. By 1944, the war situation could no longer be disguised

under the propagandistic veil of the Reich. *Kolberg* attempted to place the female experience in the Second World War in context, reassuring the female population that their efforts for the Fatherland had not been in vain. They should see themselves as the residents of Kolberg, who sacrificed everything, but who emerged with their honour intact. Female roles in these films from 1940–1945 reflected the contemporary situation of women on the home front and the course of the War. By 1942, interest in the contemporary plot was flagging, as demonstrated by the public reaction to *Die große Liebe*. As the War progressed and defeats were becoming more apparent, the population saw the cinema as a means of escapism. The production of films with such ‘war-women’ as Inge, Annelie and Franziska slowed after 1942, and were replaced with the high-kicking women of the musicals. The characters, which bought a certain ‘reality’ to the Reich screens and an identification with their audience, had their heyday between 1937 and 1942 and reappeared but once when the women of Hitler’s failing empire needed them most.

Notes

- 1 BAP R55/000879. Dr Joseph Goebbels to the Minister and Chief of the Reich Chancellery of the Führer. 16 February 1943, Berlin.
- 2 BAP R55/000879. To the Reich Minister. Re: Ufa Celebrations. Programme for 3–5 March 1943. The document suggests that the following people receive War Service crosses (1st Class): Dr Winkler, Veit Harlan, Wolfgang Liebeneiner and, later, Karl Ritter. The following were to receive War Service crosses: (Directors) Eduard Von Borsody, Willi Forst, Helmut Käutner, Herbert Maisch, Hans Steinhoff; (Actors) Willy Fritsch, Ferdinand Marian, Käthe Dorsch, Heidemarie Hatheyer, Hilde Krahle, Kristina Söderbaum and Paula Wessely. A note from the Ministerial Cabinet (Fischer) to Herrn ORR Reimer on the 30 January 1943 confirmed Goebbels wishes regarding the awarding of the honours; ‘Point 6. The Minister has already fundamentally proposed the awards of the War Service cross (first class) to Harlan, Liebeneiner and possibly Ritter.’ Goebbels’ proposal was met with a cool response from Hitler. The Personnel department contacted the RMVP with Hitler’s requests on 4 February 1943: ‘The Führer will not perform the awarding of the war service crosses . . . Attention should also be drawn to the fact that the Führer would strongly urge the withholding of the war service crosses. This especially applies to the first class war service crosses.’ Frowein, Goebbels’ personal assistant, acknowledged the wishes of the Führer four days later: ‘In response to the Minister’s request, there can be no combination of the

Anniversary of the film company [Ufa] with the awarding of War Service Crosses of various classes. In accordance with the requests, the Führer would propose Harlan and Liebeneiner for the title of “professor.” To Ministerial Division Oblt. Frowein. Berlin, 8 February 1943.

- 3 Goebbels. Speech at the War meeting of the RKK on 15 February 1941 in Berlin. In Albrecht, G., *op.cit.*, p. 468.
- 4 BAP R56 I/110. Hans Hinkel. Paper entitled *Kampf bis zum Endsieg!* 1944.
- 5 Jowett, G. S. & O'Donnell, V., *Propaganda and Persuasion*. (Sage, California, 1992, 2nd ed.), p. 96. In their work on *Propaganda and Persuasion*, Jowett and O'Donnell note that ‘during the war, entertainment was not only a luxury but also an emotional necessity’. They further highlight this aspect of war propaganda in studying the Hollywood model. With reference to a 1945 report, compiled by Dorothy Jones of the Office of War Information, they stress that ‘by 1943, having grown tired of war films, not only the home front audience but also the combat forces preferred to see a spate of musicals, comedies and escapist romances that the movie industry was only too happy to turn out. This blend of war films and escapist material . . . combined to create a potent propaganda source for morale building during this difficult period in American History.’
- 6 Lochner, L.P., *op.cit.*, p. 228.
- 7 Sorlin, P., *European Cinemas, European Societies*. (Routledge, London, 1991), p. 31.
- 8 BAP R56 I/000104. Hinkel's Personal Correspondence. Report by Hans Hinkel regarding the use of art in wartime, 1944.
- 9 Belling, C., ‘Das Frontkino – damals und heute’ in *Filmwelt*, 29 December 1939. No. 52.
- 10 BAP R56 I/110. Hans Hinkel, *Film und Totaler Krieg. Meldung über Reichskabinettsitzung mit 2 bis 3 Sätzen*. August 1944.
- 11 BAP R56 I/110. Hans Hinkel, *Kampf bis zum Endsieg!* Written as a series of speeches and publications in 1944.
- 12 BAP R56 I/110. Wolfgang Liebeneiner, *Alle müssen zur Stelle sein!* In a collection of documents intended as publication papers or speeches from 1944.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 BAP R56 VI/000005. From Dr Müller-Goerne to the RKK. Berlin, 8 March 1945. Dr. MG/Pe.
- 15 BDC Olga Tschachowa file. RKK 2600. Box 0214. File 06. Hinkel to Goebbels, 28 August 1943.
- 16 BDC Olga Tschachowa film. RKK 2600. Box 0214. File 06. Hinkel to Goebbels, 1 September 1943.
- 17 BDC Paula Wessely. RKK 2600. Box 0229. File 14. WHW to Wessely, 15 November 1938.

- 18 BAP R56I/19. Report on the film work at the University of Cologne, 1936.
- 19 The *Tätigkeitsberichte* 1943–5 are defined and discussed by Michael Balfour in *Propaganda in War – 1939–1945. Organisations, Policies and Publics in Britain and Germany*. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979.). He defines the TKB reports as ‘reports on activity’, and further notes that ‘the title seems intended to suggest that they are reports on what the compilers have been doing. If so, it is misleading, because they are in fact reports on public opinion which seem to have used the SD series as one of their sources. Goebbels may have wanted to conceal the fact that he was doing something he was supposed not to.’ (pp. 449–50).
- 20 BAP R55/000601. TKB 19 December 1944.
- 21 BAP R55/663. From Leiter K.i.V. OKR Schmitt-Halin to the Reich Minister. Berlin, 26 April 1944.
- 22 BAK Ufa minutes. No. 1562. 31 March 1944. Ufa cinemas lost as a result of the attacks (date of attack in brackets); Kiel (25–27 July 1944), Stuttgart (26 July 1944), Ludwigshafen (31 July 1944), Saarbrücken (3 August 1944), Strasbourg (11 August 1944), Brunswick (12 August 1944), Vienna (8 July 1944) and Munich (12 July 1944).
- 23 BAK Ufa minutes. No. 1562. 31 March 1944.
- 24 BAK Ufa Minutes. No. 1561. 15 March 1944.
- 25 BAP R55/656. Hinkel Minutes of meeting with Goebbels. 29 July 1944.
- 26 BAP R56I/110. Memorandum from Hinkel. 21 July 1944
- 27 BAP R55/000018.
- 28 NAW T70/8 IB 1007 Ref/ *Deutsche Kulturfilmmezentrale*. Merged with the *Deutsche Wochenschau Zentrale* to form the *Deutsche Wochenschau – und Kulturfilmzentrale* in January 1942. From *Filmabteilung* to Herrn May, *Abt. Pers.* Pers. 1007/7,12/42. From verbal Ministerial decision, 31 December 1942. Details of the staff redistribution in previous section.
- 29 All information here from BAP R55/656, unless otherwise stated.
- 30 Lenich, O. (ed.), *Reichsfilmkammer Jahrbuch*. 1937.
- 31 Albrecht, G., *op.cit.*, p. 419.
- 32 T70/37 *Reichsfilmprüfstelle*. Memorandum to the RMVP on 1942 staffings, showing gender balance. 9 February 1942.
- 33 T70/37 *Reichsfilmprüfstelle*. Personnel Department informing Ref Voss and ROI Herrmann that Jahnke (*Reichsfilmprüfstelle*) was releasing women from his department. Pers 1320/Schm. 5,11 (44). 9 August 1944.
- 34 NAW T70/8. *Filmabteilung* to Herrn May Personnel Department. Pers 1007/7,12/42. 8 January 1943.
- 35 NAW T70/8. Head of the Personnel department. FJJJJ/319-2614. Secret document. 18 February 1943.
- 36 BAP R55/656. RFI and RPL to Ufa. *Ufa-Sonderproduktion*. 4 August 1944.

- 37 BAP R55/656. RFI and RPL to Ufa. *Ufa-Wirtschaftsfilm*. 4 August 1944.
- 38 BAP R55/656. RFI and RPL to Film Concerns. 4 August 1944. *Cautio Treuhand GmbH* also lost staff to the war effort. NAW T70/8.
- 39 BAP R58/155. SD Report. 4 October 1940. *Aufnahme der Veröffentlichungen über das Filmprogramm 1940/41*.
- 40 BAP NS18/357. NSDAP GRPL. Gp/Ir/St. Ti/Hu. 13 November 1942. Bold my own.
- 41 BAP NS18/352. To all *Gauleiter and Propagandaleiter*. From Hugo Fischer. Berlin, 29 October 1941. See chapter on Heroic women for further details of this scheme of ticket distribution.
- 42 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series I, Vol. 3), p. 127. 29 April 1937.
- 43 BAFA 17824. *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort*. Ufa Premiere programme. 21 January 1938.
- 44 Figures from Albrecht, G., *op.cit.*, p. 418.
- 45 Kreimeier, K. and Töteberg, M., 'Wunschkonzert'. *Ufa Magazin* no. 19 (Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, 1992), p. 14.
- 46 BAP R 56 I/000104. Hinkel's Personal Correspondence. *Der einsatz unsere Kunst im Krieg*. 1940.
- 47 BAP R 58/157. SD Report dated 17 February 1941.
- 48 Werner, I., *So wird's nie wieder sein. Ein Leben mit Pfiff!* (Ullstein, Frankfurt-am-Main, Berlin, 1996), pp. 106–10. The author contacted Werner to request an interview and was informed that she no longer spoke about her films and has never given an interview about them. Werner to the author, 20 April 1995.
- 49 BAP R 56 I/000114. 'Das Wunschkonzert', in *Filmwelt*. Nr. 12. 13 September 1940.
- 50 Boelcke, W., *op.cit.*, 29 January 1940, p. 17
- 51 Schmidt, A, in *Deutscher Filmzeitung* Munich, 12 January 1941. Quoted in Romani, C., *op.cit.*, p. 138.
- 52 Werner, I., *op.cit.*, p. 107.
- 53 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*. *Wunschkonzert*. Nr. 3166. BAFA 19913.
- 54 *Ibid*.
- 55 BAP R 58/157. SD Report. 17/2/1941.
- 56 BAP R 56 I/114. *Filmwelt*. 13 September 1940. Nr. 12.
- 57 BFI *Wunschkonzert*. 306377. Reproduced by BFI stills, posters and designs.
- 58 Hembus, J. and Bandmann, C., *Klassiker des deutschen Tonfilms 1930–1960*. (Citadel – Filmbücher, Goldmann, Munich, 1980). p. 141.
- 59 BAFA 19913. Song card for *Wunschkonzert*.
- 60 This theory is expanded by Theweleit, K., *Male Fantasies. Vol. One. Women, Floods, Bodies and History*. (Polity, Cambridge, 1987). 'Even the "good mother" is . . . a split figure. One side of her . . . is loving and protective . . . ; the other side (mothers of comrades etc.) is hard. The latter appears as mothers-

of-Iron, who don't even bat an eyelid at the news of the death of the sons they have sacrificed so much to raise. A loving, caring side is posed in opposition to a cold, distantly heroic side . . . The mothers derive their heroism from the attitudes they exhibit when they lose their sons or husbands . . . Suffering is not only taken for granted, it is expressly admired.' pp. 103–4.

- 61 BAP R 58/ 157. SD Report 17 February 1941.
- 62 Theweleit, K., *op.cit.*, p. 103.
- 63 *Ibid.*, p. 108.
- 64 Silberman, M., *German Cinema. Texts in Context.* (Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1995), p. 72.
- 65 BAP R 56 I/114. *Filmwelt.* 13 September 1940. Nr. 12.
- 66 Hippler quoted in Beyer, F., *op.cit.*, p. 259.
- 67 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series 2.Vol. 4), p. 451. 31 December 1940.
- 68 Figures from Sander, A.U., *op.cit.*, Tables.
- 69 *Ibid.*
- 70 BAP NS 18/357. Various regional RPL reports to Tießler in 1942–3.
- 71 The films produced in 1941 and released in 1942 marked the end of the cinematic 'realism' of the wartime cinema. This is particularly apparent in the public reaction to *Die große Liebe*. The films after 1942 demonstrated a marked change in policy, concentrating on entertainment rather than overt socio-political commentary.
- 72 Singleton, D. and Weidenfeld, A., *The Goebbels Experiment. A Study of the Nazi Propaganda Machine.* (Butler and Tanner, London, 1942.), p. 210. I have translated the film titles back to the original German, rather than use the English translations provided in the book.
- 73 BDC RKK 2705. Box 0006. File 18. Marit Barnek testifying for Ilse Werner. 17 January 1946.
- 74 BDC RKK 2600 Box 0229. File 01. Fine Order to Ilse Werner. GFd/st.BMr./GFh. 746/263.
- 75 BDC RKK 2705 Box 0006. File 18. Blankhenese. Eta Marten testifying for Ilse Werner on 20 March 1946.
- 76 BDC RKK 2705. Box 0006. File 18. Interrogation of Ilse Werner by Captain Nichols on 29 October 1946.
- 77 Werner, I., *op.cit.*, pp. 120–22.
- 78 BDC RKK 2705. Box 0006. File 18. RFK 25 February 1944.
- 79 *Ibid.* Carl Opitz, testifying for Werner, on 19 March 1946.
- 80 BDC RKK 2705. Box 0006. File 18. Interrogation of Werner by Captain Nichols on 29 October 1946.
- 81 BDC RKK 2701. Box 0022. File 04.
- 82 BDC RKK 2701. Box 0022. File 04. George Freimarck, Chief of Intelligence, 22 March 1946.

- 83 BDC RKK 2701 Box 0008. File 63. SHAEF report.
- 84 BDC. RKK 2667. Box 0013. File 60. Note from the RFK confirming Hoppe's fees. RFK Alb/Kr. 1 April 1941.
- 85 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier. Auf Wiedersehen Franziska!* Nr. 3201 BAFA 1048.
- 86 BAFA 1048. Ufa publicity booklet, 1941.
- 87 Figures from Albrecht, G., *op.cit.*, p. 418.
- 88 BAP NS 18/347. Deputy Gauleiter Trautmann. Magdeburg to RFK (Tießler) 11 October 1941.
- 89 *Ibid.*
- 90 *Ibid.*
- 91 SHAEF Report. BFI. *Die große Liebe*.
- 92 BAFA 6214. *Die große Liebe*. Reproduced by Fotografie, Berlin.
- 93 BAFA 6214. *Die große Liebe*. Reproduced by Fotografie, Berlin.
- 94 Farago, L., *German Psychological Warfare*. Produced for the Committee for National Morale. (G.P. Putnam's, New York, 1941) Section 46. p. 91.
- 95 Goebbels' Total War Speech, 18 February 1943. Reproduced in Welch, D., *op.cit.*, (1995), p. 109.
- 96 'Theorie und Praxis' in *Filmkritik*. Nr. 1, 1966. p. 16.
- 97 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series 2, Vol. 4.), p. 289. 14 May 1942.
- 98 Lochner, L. P., *op.cit.*, p. 173.
- 99 Information from Sander, A.U., *op.cit.*, p. 418.
- 100 BAK R 109 I/ 2874. 13/10/42. Ref: IF H/BI.
- 101 BDC RKK. 2600 Box 0121 File 14. Ufa to Leander confirming payment.
- 102 Figures from Albrecht, G., *op.cit.*, Tables.
- 103 *Ibid.*
- 104 E. Kraft in *Die Filmwoche*. June 1942. Quoted in Romani, C., *op.cit.*, p. 82.
- 105 H.W. Betts in *Der Film* on 13 June 1942. Quoted in Romani, C., *op.cit.*, p. 83.
- 106 *Film-Kurier* reported this on 5 August 1943. Quoted in Wulf, J., *op.cit.*, p. 409.
- 107 BAK R 109/000006 3 *Sitzung der Firmen Produktionschef* on 30 April 1942. Point II.
- 108 Whilst claiming that she was opposed to the production of the film, Söderbaum accepted the sum of RM 80,000 for her role. BDC Söderbaum film RKK 2672 Box 0004 File 51. (Dr Müller-Goerne, 12 July 1943.) This was double her usual fee of RM 40,000 in 1942. (28 July 1942) RKK 2672. Box 0004, File 51.
- 109 Söderbaum, K., *op.cit.*, p. 191.
- 110 Letter from Goebbels to Harlan, 1 June 1943. BAFA 9122.
- 111 Semmler, R., *op.cit.*, p. 194.
- 112 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier. Kolberg*. No. 3379. BAFA 9122.

- 113 BAP R55/664. RFI to the *Kreisleiter* of Görlitz. Distribution of the copy of *Kolberg* to the town. 27 February 1945.
- 114 Söderbaum, however, received RM 80,000 for her role as Maria. BDC RKK 2672. Box 0004. File 51. Dr Müller-Goerne to Söderbaum regarding payment for *Kolberg*. Dr. MG/Pf., 12 July 1943.
- 115 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series II, Vol. 8), p. 425. 6 June 1943.
- 116 Harlan, V., *op.cit.*, p. 258.
- 117 Söderbaum for an Interview for BBC Television. *We Have Ways of Making you Think. Goebbels, Master of Propaganda*. 1992.
- 118 IWMS 2933/2. Interview with Kristina Söderbaum.
- 119 Wilfred von Oven in the 1992 BBC Interview.
- 120 BAP R55/664. Hinkel to Goebbels. 6 December 1944.
- 121 Harlan, V., *op.cit.*, p. 270.
- 122 BAP R55/664. Hinkel to Goebbels. 6 December 1944.
- 123 BAP R55/664. RFI to *Staatssekretär*. 18 October 1944.
- 124 BAP R55/664. SS RMVP to RPA Pomerania. 19 October 1944. *Kolberg* was also in Pomerania.
- 125 Söderbaum, K., *op.cit.*, p. 195.
- 126 *Ibid.*
- 127 BAP R55/664. RFI to Goebbels. 1 February 1945.
- 128 IWMS 2933/2. Interview with Söderbaum.
- 129 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series II. Vol. 14), pp. 310–11. 1 December 1944.
- 130 BAP R55/664.
- 131 BAP R55/664. RFI to Goebbels. 25 February 1945.
- 132 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series II. Vol. 14), pp. 310–11. 1 December 1944.
- 133 *Ibid.*

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Entertainment Feature Films in the Third Reich, 1939–1945 The Films of Marika Rökk

Introduction

The war film enabled the RMVP to provide the cinema audience with tangible contemporary plots, creating a sense of identification with the issues of a wartime existence. This was particularly true for women, who were, by 1942, targeted by this cinematic campaign. As demonstrated in the previous section, the audience was tiring of the War and the portrayal of topical issues on the screen. Escapism and entertainment were paramount in the maintenance of morale. The public demanded escapism and a report for the RPL on 13 November 1942 noted the rural demand for entertainment films, which enjoyed ‘a rapid increase in visitor numbers compared to the visitor numbers for war-themed films’. The report estimated that, in some cases, the cinema visitor numbers had risen by over 100 per cent.¹ Dissatisfaction with the political cinematic programme offered by National Socialism in the War was also evidenced by the public’s abandonment of the weekly newsreel.²

Goebbels too recognised the need for relaxation and entertainment in the war years. His diary entries in 1943 detail the role to be played by film in the propaganda campaign. He noted in his diary on 29 November 1943, that ‘it is surprising that the theatres and cinemas have opened their doors again and that people are fairly streaming into them. There are queues before all of them. People crave recreation after the gruelling days and nights of the past week. They want solace for their souls.’³ On 13 February, one year earlier in 1942, Goebbels confided in his diary that German film should try to create ‘light and entertaining characters’, which, he claimed, were demanded ‘by the people in these difficult days of war’.⁴ He added, on 26 February, that ‘Tobis are now gradually beginning to produce . . . entertainment films for the broader masses. At the moment, these are absolutely necessary . . . For this reason, it is important to keep people in a good mood and to strengthen the moral resilience of the broad masses.’⁵

Goebbels foresaw that entertainment films had their part to play in his carefully directed wartime cinematic propaganda campaign. Under the guise of the musical

or comedy, film was exploited by the Ministry. This did not relate to Hitler's version of a blatant propaganda campaign, as discussed in *Mein Kampf*, but conformed more to Goebbels' disguised and less dogmatic methods of persuasion. Feature films, as the *Gauleiter* of Brandenburg pointed out to Hippler and Tießler, 'had a subconscious effect',⁶ on the public and, as such, could contain subtle and less direct ideological messages. The fact that Goebbels requested the inclusion of 'pure entertainment' in the film programme of the war years suggested that the entertainment film itself played a crucial role in the maintenance of morale. It also provided Goebbels with a sophisticated means to transmit Nazi ideology, if somewhat less frequently than in other main politically based feature films. This subtlety becomes difficult to identify in such escapist feature films and fosters the 'subconscious effect' of NS war feature film propaganda.

The decision to provide the German public with escapist entertainment was typified by the screening of *Münchhausen* [Josef v. Baky, 1943, 4th German Colour film] for the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations of Ufa. *Münchhausen* told the tale of Karl Friederich, the Baron von Münchhausen, played by the outlandish actor Hans Albers,⁷ who embarked upon many fictional and fantastic adventures through space and time. The production, filmed in Agfacolor and pioneering many cinematic special effects, became the centrepiece for celebrations of the biggest film concern in Germany and was screened at a special premiere on Friday, 5 March 1943 at 5p.m.⁸ The premiere at the Ufa Palast am Zoo in Berlin was to become one of the great events of the film community, with a pre-screening reception at the Hotel Kaiserhof with Goebbels in attendance.⁹ *Münchhausen* typified the need for wartime escapism, with its lavish sets, extraordinary costumes and fantastical plots. The film, however, was a unique experiment for Ufa.

The majority of films in the latter years of the War had a comedic or musical theme. The musical became an important genre in the wartime cinema, providing the female population with an important means of escapism. Despite their apparent hatred of the American *Unkultur*, the Third Reich modelled their musicals on their Hollywood counterparts, drawing much inspiration from their glossy presentation and the American flare for producing the ultimate entertainment film.¹⁰ Goebbels placed great weight in the argument that escapism was a means of propaganda, as reflected in the film programme for the Nazi years. In his analysis of Nazi cinema, David Welch demonstrated that 'of the entire production of feature films, virtually half were either love stories or comedies; and a quarter dramatic films like crime thrillers or musicals . . . [This] illustrates Goebbels' intentions of mixing entertainment with propaganda.'¹¹ This form of escapism became increasingly important as the War continued, and the mixed programme of entertainment and politics was crucial for the maintenance of morale on the home front.

The export of entertainment films, however, became somewhat problematic for the RMVP. Such films were not exported East, for example, to the Ukraine.

Concerned that the presentation of Germany enhanced the opinion that the Reich had compromised its own ideology, the SD reported, on 4 December 1942, that,

Romantic comedies and society pieces have almost always been included in the programme. The bar and hotel scenes, elegant flat furnishings, feudal landed estates, expensive cars, elegant clothes, into which most films degenerate, hardly passes on a good picture of German life to the Ukrainian, and convinces the Ukrainian that the majority of Soviet agitation is correct in saying that Germany really leads a capitalistic way of life.¹²

Despite the lack of export value in the East, the RMVP managed to find a Western market for entertainment films in the Occupied Territories. The most important recipient, however, continued to be the home-front female audience. The films provided them with a means of escapism from the realities of war and presented them with leading female figures in the films of the Reich, with women dominating the musical genre. With this in mind, this section concentrates on the musical, looking in particular at the wartime films of Marika Rökk. Rökk was the most recognisable dancer in the cinema of the Reich and as such offers a wide range of musicals for analysis. Very little has been written on the films of Marika Rökk to date and, as the key musical star of the Reich, it is essential that she be included in her own right in any study of the image of women in German entertainment films of the war years. The all-singing, all-dancing Rökk became a symbol of hope to cinema audiences, bringing glossy Hollywood-type productions to the German screen. The first two films, *Kora Terry* (Georg Jacoby, 1940) and *Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten* (Women are indeed the better Diplomats, Georg Jacoby, 1941) made full use of the cinematic spectacle, using special effects in the case of the first film, where Rökk appears as a twin and in colour in the second production, the first of its kind in Germany. In the final film, *Die Frau meiner Träume* (The Woman of my Dreams, Georg Jacoby, 1944), Rökk teams up with the comic sidekick, Grethe Weiser, doubling the entertainment effect of the film, combining the comedic, musical and dancing genres, for which Rökk and Weiser were renowned.

Choreography and dance was an integral part of the musical genre and became increasingly in demand in the latter years of the War. In August 1943, Dr Müller-Goerne took special steps to ensure that every studio had a good proportion of female dancers at hand. The studios were experiencing ‘considerable difficulties’ in recruiting dancers for their productions due to the dancers ‘overlapping commitments in the opera, theatre and variety shows’.¹³ By January 1944, film firms were offering financial incentives for dancers to appear in films, paying the group dancer RM 50 per filming day and RM 25 for screen tests, and the solo dancer RM 100 for filming and RM 50 per test day.¹⁴ The demands specified that the dancers had to be female, carving an important niche for women in the films of the Reich.

Indeed, it was claimed by *Filmwelt*, on 19 January 1940, in a series on female film roles, that ‘it was once said that women can show their innate gifts in two forms, which heightened and reached perfection: in acting and in dancing. Only these two forms allow women to always remain totally female.’¹⁵ Goebbels too admitted in his diary that ‘the dance film must show the bodies of beautiful women’.¹⁶

The woman to initiate the experiments of Nazi cinema in mimicking the Hollywood musical was La Jana. Born in Vienna and a resident of Frankfurt am Main from the age of two, she attended the ballet school of the Frankfurt Opera House at the age of eight and became a star of the theatre at sixteen. She was spotted in a Dresden revue and made her first foray into films with a few silent features. She became best known for her appearances as the dancing star of *Der Tiger von Eschnapur* (The Tiger from Eschnapur, Richard Eichberg, 1938), *Das Indische Grabmal* (The Indian Tomb, Richard Eichberg, Hans Zerlett, 1938), and *Truxa* (Hans Zerlett, 1936). In her last film, *Stern von Rio* (The Star from Rio, Karl Anton, 1940), she was described as being, ‘so alive and delightful’.¹⁷ On 13 March 1940, shortly after a tour across Germany, La Jana died of a severe fever, leaving a vacuum in the German film industry. La Jana had been the primary dance and musical star of Nazi film.

La Jana’s place was taken by Marika Röck, who became popular shortly after La Jana’s death. Born in Cairo of Hungarian parents, Röck quickly achieved fame through a series of films with the Dutch actor, Johannes Heeres. The three pre-war films *Der Bettelstudent* (The Beggar Student, Georg Jacoby, 1936), *Gasparone* (Georg Jacoby, 1937) and *Hallo, Janine!* (Hello, Janine!, Carl Boese, 1939) effectively set Röck in place to step into La Jana’s shoes. Röck had studied in New York but found little luck in pursuing her career there. The start of Röck’s career came with the RMVP’s desire to offer musicals intended to rival Hollywood productions. Röck was also aided by her marriage to the film director Georg Jacoby, with whom she made most of her wartime films, which she claimed were predominantly ‘pure entertainment’ films, without any political tendency, apart from a cameo role in von Borsody’s 1940 production, *Wunschkonzert*.

Despite the fact that her films were produced in the Reich and under the auspices of the RMVP, Röck claimed that her films were without *Tendenz* (bias) and maintained her neutrality in the politics of the Reich. She noted in her memoirs:

I was totally apolitical, as I am today. I have always concentrated on my career. Of course I stood on the sunny side of life as an Ufa star, whilst Jacoby had to struggle with quite a number of difficulties . . . I am apolitical, through and through. I never voted. I was never in a Party. I am happy when I am left in peace. Everything else I couldn’t care less about.¹⁸

Rökk maintained this attitude in defending her films in the Allied post-war interrogation. On 25 July 1946, she told the Allied commission:

My films were without any political bias. They were merely musical entertainment films. On these grounds, they were almost always rejected by the Ministry . . . [Goebbels] banned my operetta films and allowed only love stories, into which the music was logically built in . . . our films stayed free from any bias.¹⁹

That her films were considered politically unimportant by the establishment is reflected in the absence of both Rökk and Jacoby from the lists of War Service crosses to be awarded at the 1943 Ufa anniversary celebrations.²⁰ The couple, however, did receive the same financial rewards as actors and directors producing the Reich's political cinematic works. In 1944, Rökk was listed as a 'group one' actress, earning an annual salary of RM 96,000 or a monthly salary of RM 8,000, along with Kristina Söderbaum (*Jud Süß, Die goldene Stadt, Immensee, Opfergang* and *Kolberg*) and Paula Wessely (*Heimkehr*).²¹ Jacoby himself was rated as the fourth highest paid director of the Reich, receiving RM 35,000 for direction, RM 7,500 for script work and RM 42,500 for his contribution to both aspects of production on each film he made.²²

In her memoirs, Rökk underplayed the relationship both she and her husband enjoyed with the regime. She detailed her first meeting with Hitler, which demonstrated both her appeal as an entertainer in the Reich and pointed to her recognition of the abundance of foreign actresses working in the German film industry. She recalled:

I thought, 'Hopefully he won't come over here.' Then my German wasn't particularly good . . . Then he was there. He said to me, ' . . . you're the little Hungarian. I've seen your films. Enchanting,' and he talked on like this. With me, only with me. I thought, 'Lucky that I can understand him.' He asked, 'You can do so much. Ride, dance, acrobatics. Have you got a double?' I hummed and hawed, 'No, no. No double.' He asked . . . 'Is that not true? She can do everything! . . . what, dear lady, can't you do?' 'Speak German, Herr Hitler.' Everyone laughed. He the loudest of all, 'How many Germans, do you think, can even speak German themselves?' he said. Then he left.²³

Rökk maintained friendly contact with Hitler throughout the 1940's. Along with her husband, she sent a congratulatory New Year's telegram to the Führer on 1 January 1940, wishing him 'providence in the coming years in your struggle for the German people's freedom', and sending him 'joyous wishes in these fateful hours'.²⁴ Eleven months later, Rökk was contacting the Führer once again, this time to thank him for the flowers he sent her for her birthday, commenting: 'I am so touched that you could spare a few moments to cheer me up, diverting yourself from your crucial work.'²⁵ Rökk's relationship with Hitler was no different from

any other star of the Third Reich. Hitler's love of the cinema was well documented. He frequently viewed films at the *Berghof* at Berchtesgarden and was presented with '30 classic films of the last four years and 18 Mickey Mouse films',²⁶ as a Christmas present from Goebbels in 1937. In the last years of the Reich, a small cinema was installed in the Bunker,²⁷ evidence that film remained an important element of both the Führer and his Minister's ideology until the final days of the Reich. During his years in power, Goebbels forged links between the State and the film industry, the very nature of which made it impossible for film stars to avoid direct contact with the Nazi hierarchy, especially stars who were held in high regard by the establishment, such as Röck and her husband.

Röck played no direct role in the war effort, avoiding conscription to one of the Berlin workshops in November 1944 along with Jenny Jugo.²⁸ Her screen image was too important to the Reich who classed her as a 'first rate actress'.²⁹ Röck became known as the bubbly, energetic and dextrous star of the Reich musicals. On 19 January 1940, *Filmwelt* described her as being able to,

unleash a smile in the dance . . . the bobbing, shaking, pattering, stomping rhythm and swinging is immediately infectious. Marika can do everything. Whether she is under the big top, or performing salchows on horseback; boisterous and fearless, she romps around. When she dances, no-one can forget her; the pouty, supple, tender and playful [girl] who always arouses our sympathy, with the little glimmer of sadness in her eyes.³⁰

Röck's appeal lay in her ability to combine this array of talents, providing the German cinema-going public with an all-round entertainer, capable of fusing acrobatics with dance and song. Her films became the most popular of the Reich and have an enduring quality today. The *Berliner Filmclub* selected Röck's 1940 production *Kora Terry* for screening in its Monday Evening nostalgia trip in June 1991.³¹ This film kick-started Röck's career as the queen of the musical, whilst demonstrating that women could explore diverse roles within the entertainment films of the Reich.

***Kora Terry* (Georg Jacoby, 1940)**

Kora Terry premiered on 27 November 1940 and was the perfect vehicle for Röck, who played the twin sisters Mara and Kora Terry. The film told the story of dancing sisters, who, whilst similar in appearance, possessed opposite characters. The blonde Mara represented 'the good woman', always honest and loving, tolerant of her sister's antics, faithful to the homeland, and assuming the role of a surrogate mother to her sister's daughter. The dark-haired Kora on the other hand was presented as the evil twin, who gambled, smoked and indulged in alcohol, seduced Mara's sweetheart, Michael Varany, and was involved in espionage in the Middle

East. In the production stages, concerns were voiced over Röck's ability to cope with the opposing characters. Jacoby defended his wife's abilities: 'I know my wife. She is a naïve child and also an erotic woman. She has these opposite sides.'³² In order to make the roles more distinct for Röck, Jacoby filmed all the fiery 'Kora' scenes in the morning and the placid 'Mara' scenes in the afternoon.³³ Goebbels opposed the initial concept of the double role, as Röck recalls in her memoirs, 'Goebbels was angry with *Kora Terry*. Goebbels wanted no double roles. "Double roles are rubbish," he decided.'³⁴ Nevertheless, Jacoby was intent on casting Röck in the double role, using a stand-in for the profile of the second Terry sister. Peter Kreuder, the composer of the film score, recalled that the Röck double was taken from a concentration camp, although Kreuder justified that she was not returned there after the conclusion of filming.³⁵

The film traces the fateful story of the Terry sisters, which begins at the Odean Music Hall, where they were performing their acrobatic dance routine. As a result of Kora's careless attitude, Mara falls, breaking her ankle and confining her to bed for a few weeks. In her absence, Kora attempts to seduce Michael Varany, the sweetheart of her injured sister. Kora decides to pursue her career in Algeria, where she becomes involved in espionage, after having gambled away large sums of money. Mara discovers her sister's intentions and accidentally shoots her. Tobs, a family friend, who witnesses the incident, persuades Mara to perform as Kora and Tobs take the blame for shooting 'Mara'. Mara travels to the United States, where she finds great success. After learning of 'Kora's' tour, Vopescu, the espionage agent, blackmails Mara. The case eventually ends up in court, where Mara's true identity is revealed by X-rays showing her previously broken ankle.

The opening scenes of the film distinguish between Mara and Kora. Kora is seen to be drinking and behaving in a flirtatious manner. She is constantly late for rehearsals. When she finally arrives, she is elegantly dressed and strips down to her underwear without a thought as to who surrounds her. She arrogantly reads the messages on the flowers in her dressing room. Mara is modestly dressed and punctual. As with the other Röck musicals,³⁶ clothing denotes character and intention. The two outfits of the Terry sisters are very different, with Mara's suit having longer sleeves, whilst Kora is dressed in a halter-neck top of similar material, ripping off her skirt in the course of the dance routine, flirting with the audience. The singing style and artistic interpretation of the first number denotes future plot developments. Mara sings sweetly with an angelic voice, whilst Kora belts out the song, in a feisty, energetic and fiery manner. In attempting a difficult lift, Mara slips, after 'Kora Terry makes a small but unsure step.'³⁷ Mara's ankle is broken and her sweetheart and composer, Michael Varany, rushes to her assistance. Kora quickly realises that Mara is unable to dance and flirts with Michael. When asked of her plans for the evening, glancing seductively at Michael, Kora replies, 'Tell him I can't come tonight. I have to look after my sister.' As Mara lay in bed, Kora

seduces Michael. She dances around the room in front of Mara, drinking and smoking, and turning Mara's favourite piano piece into a loud and erotic number. Michael is mesmerised by Kora's blatant sexuality and sensualism.

Kora's seduction of Michael and her command of his artistic services distresses her sister. Mara's love for Michael is pointed out to Kora by Tobs, a family friend:

Tobs: Are you blind, Kora? Mara loves the composer. And you have taken him away. She wants to marry him!

Kora: And? He wants my love!

Kora's cold attitude to her sister's feelings emphasises Kora's opportunism in attempting to further her own career, regardless of Mara's happiness. The opening scenes of the film are indicative of the characters of the twin sisters. Mara is the unassuming, loving and vulnerable sister, representing the ideal of womanhood, whilst Kora, finding no love for the composer or her sister, pursues her own selfish course. She is seductive, erotic and sensual when she desires to further her own aims. She is purely concerned with her career and the promotion of her own fame as a solo artist, rather than as a duo. She is often seen to indulge in alcohol, smoking and flirtation. Kora is the antithesis of Mara, and thereby of the 'good' woman. The *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* defines Kora by her 'greed . . . and unrestrained nature', leading 'a frivolous and reckless way of life'. As with other interpretations of the artistic lifestyle, fame, fortune and pretension are blamed for Kora's shortcomings, noting that 'It is the artist. They don't talk much of guilt or innocence.'³⁸

Representation of Kora is juxtaposed with the image of Mara as the surrogate mother to Kora's daughter, Ilona, conceived and born out of wedlock. Mara cares for Ilona, who, according to the *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*, 'was never taken care of due to the frivolity of her mother'.³⁹ Once again Mara and Kora are compared by Jacoby. Mara takes on maternal properties, having a good manner with children, whilst Kora is far too busy promoting her own career and living her life to care about her child, as the following scene demonstrates:

Ilona: Who are the presents from?

Mara: Your mummy.

Ilona: [Looks disappointed] Why didn't she come with you?

Mara: Because she's busy today.

The next scene in the sequence reveals the nature of Kora's engagement which prevented her from visiting her child. Kora is performing in a men's club. She is singing an erotic and sensual number and is dressed accordingly.

Kora decides to pursue her career interests in Algeria. Mara and Tobs accompany her in this voyage. Singing to yet another crowd of men, a female observer sums

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Figure 11. Mara becomes the surrogate mother of Kora's daughter, Ilona

up the character of Kora, commenting: 'This woman is very famous, but a bit dangerous, is that not so?' Kora's dangerous character draws her towards espionage in the course of her trip, and she becomes involved in the trafficking of plans. Bribing Kora with money and jewels, Vopescu charms Kora into aiding him. Jacoby reverts to the portrayal of Mara, who discovers that Michael has been left by Kora and has taken to alcohol. The maternal bond between Mara and Ilona is again affirmed in the ensuing conversation:

Michael: Have you came straight from seeing the little one?

Mara: Yes, she wouldn't let me leave!

Mara informs Michael that Kora intends to pursue a solo career, forcing Mara to earn money to keep the family. Mara and Michael decide to form a partnership, both of them having been emotionally hurt by Kora.

Mara is forced to take a job on a cruise boat to Africa, whilst Michael takes up one last chance to become a professional violinist. Mara encourages him to pursue his dream, supporting him in his chosen vocation. Kora joins Mara on the cruiser, and finds that it is a suitable way of life for her, whilst Mara objects to the many

foreigners who surround her. Kora sets about corrupting an athletics team, giving them cigarettes and ruining their fitness regime. Their trainer issues them with a stern warning about Kora:

Coach: You've been smoking!

Athlete: Frau Terry gave it to me.

Coach: If any one of you has anything to do with this woman again, you'll have to deal with me!

Kora is unmoved by the trainer's objection to her, mocking him and sarcastically naming him the *Großmama* (Grandmother).

The sisters perform separately on the cruiser, each dance routine further enhancing their characters. Dance assumes the centre stage in the musical scenes of the film. The scenes are introduced with Mara and Kora having a heated dispute over their dancing techniques, with Kora asking Mara, 'What do you know about men?' The usually placid Mara accepts Kora's criticism's of herself, but becomes animated when Kora informs Mara that she wants her daughter to become a dancer in the same vein as herself. The film once again highlights the differences between the sisters. Mara performs a sweet song about the joys of love in the German homeland. She is laughed off the stage by the Eastern men and encouraged by the German athletes, who later rescue Mara from molestation by a group of Arabs. Unlike Mara, Kora is unperturbed by the Eastern men and panders to their culture in her choice of routine, an Eastern belly dance with a boa constrictor. The Arabs prefer the low brow sexuality of Kora, with her alcoholism, gambling addiction and blatant eroticism.

The cobra scene became a high point of the film despite its implications for the character of Kora. Like the Arab audience, critics found the scene entrancing, with H.J. Ulbrich commenting in *Filmnachrichten* on 21 November 1940 that, 'Kora Terry does a wild and thrilling dance with a cobra wrapped around her neck; for a few moments the spectators' heart beats faster. But at the end of the dance she has a luminous smile on her face, and the star of *Kora Terry* shines brighter than ever in the . . . music hall.'⁴⁰

Mara can no longer abide this form of behaviour by her sister or the surroundings they are forced to perform in and decides to return home. Mara is incensed and in a fit of anger over Kora's gambling debts, shoots her twin sister, killing her. Mara is shocked and full of remorse. No sympathy is allotted to the victim, Kora. Sympathy rather is transferred to the murderer, Mara, whose honest conduct throughout the film endears her to the audience. In death, Kora receives her just punishment for her unfeminine and ruthless behaviour, paying the ultimate price for her alcoholism, gambling, promiscuity and treachery, betraying her homeland for financial rewards. The film dictates that Mara, the effective heroine of the piece,

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Figure 12. Mara fights off unwanted attention on the cruise ship

should not go to the harsh Arab prison for this crime. Tobs demonstrates his loyalty to Mara by taking the blame for the shooting. Mara's honesty and love are rewarded in the discovery of a true friend in Tobs.

Mara pursues her career as Kora and has a series of great successes in the United States, which is broken only by a telegram informing Mara that Ilona is ill. Mara immediately leaves to be at her side, only to discover the child in good health and the police awaiting her in order to prosecute her for treason and non-payment of gambling debts. Mara is to be prosecuted for the crimes of Kora, with her twin returning to haunt her life once more. The conclusion to the film sees Mara's identity restored, through X-rays proving that she was indeed the same Mara who broke her ankle on stage at the outset. Mara Terry achieves fame in her own right and is reunited with Michael, now a famous violinist and composer. The couple work together and form a new partnership, free of the evil machinations of Kora. The conclusion to the film ensures that Kora's memory is eradicated. The murder is converted into the happiness of the main protagonists, Mara, Michael and Tobs, although all have paid the price.

Despite Rökk's assertion that her films 'had no propaganda value whatsoever',⁴¹ *Kora Terry* presented an ideologically sound portrait of the female character in

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Figure 13. An extravagant dance scene in *Kora Terry*

the Third Reich. *Kora Terry* demonstrated how even ‘pure entertainment’ films were used as vehicles for the propaganda message of the RMVP. The musical genre was carefully incorporated into an overall planned propaganda strategy. The purpose of such a strategy was the deliberate fusing of ‘pure entertainment’ and ideology. In a highly political state, such as the Third Reich, even the seemingly ‘apolitical’ film contained at least one message to the German public. This message was often disguised under the veil of ‘entertainment’ or ‘escapism’.⁴²

Kora Terry concentrated on both the desirable and undesirable roles of women within the Reich. The fates of the Terry sisters suited their characters. Kora is the epitome of the ‘bad’ woman. She is flirtatious in manner, flaunting her sexuality for financial gain or artistic recognition. Kora indulges in alcohol, smoking and gambling, creating an image of the undesirable female. She is arrogant about her own abilities as an artist, claiming to an Arab admirer in the course of the film, ‘I am an artist not a little dancer.’ Her longing for fame and fortune and the predominance of her career over her duty as a mother is emphasised by Jacoby. The artistic way of life is blamed for many of Kora’s personality defects. *Filmwelt* asserts that much unhappiness accompanies fame and that the glitzy, glamorous world of the stage is not as inviting as it may appear:

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Figure 14. The contrasting images of Kora (right) and Mara (left) Terry

Indeed personal destiny also rules in the artistic world. It creates the most gripping conflict; it brings people together and with an elementary strength can just as easily tear them apart again . . . Often enough splendour, fame, acknowledgement and the joy of success on the stage is fulfilled in a short moment, until each second in the floodlight will fade and the sober hard world behind the camera is revealed.⁴³

In accordance with Nazi ideology, Mara is distrustful of the artistic community. She seeks her pleasures outside of fame and fortune and invests her time in her niece. Mara is presented as the direct opposite to her twin. She is maternal towards the abandoned Ilona and jettisons her career without hesitation when she learns of her illness. Mara is loyal to Michael Varany, without having to entice him with sexual promises. Mara's choice of dance routines and musical numbers throughout the film is indicative of her status as the 'good' Germanic woman. All songs performed by Mara are of a wholesome nature, taking the themes of pure love and the homeland as their basis. This is in stark contrast to Kora's programme, which seeks to lure men through blatant sensuality and eroticism, confirmed in her words and clothing.

At the heart of *Kora Terry* was a desire to promote the dance and musical genre, a speciality of both Röck and Jacoby, providing the German public with 'escapist entertainment'. This type of film was designed to rival the American musical, which Goebbels intended to withdraw from the German market in November 1939. This was eventually implemented in February 1941.⁴⁴ This decision had left a huge gap in the film market and Röck's films filled that vacuum. *Kora Terry* was based around glitzy, glamorous and adventurous numbers, with Röck as the centrepiece. On 19 April 1940, *Filmwelt* commented that Röck was perfectly suited to the roles of the Terry sisters, noting that 'Marika Röck has found a role here, in which she is at her most beautiful, because she fulfils everything with her acting and dancing abilities . . . Kora Terry can dance – and how she dances.'⁴⁵ On 6 December 1940, *Filmwelt* described Röck's dance routines as 'hot and impetuous, whirling and wild . . . sparkling and twinkling'.⁴⁶ This hot and impetuous side to the Röck characters became her trademark. In all three of her big musicals of the war years, Röck perfected the role of the difficult, impetuous and flirtatious woman, which attracted male attentions throughout the 1940s.

***Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten* (Women are indeed the better Diplomats, Georg Jacoby, 1941. The first colour feature film in the Reich. Agfacolor)**

Röck was presented as a manipulative woman in the two key Röck-Jacoby films of the 1940s, *Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten* (1941) and *Die Frau meiner Träume* (1944). The Röck character provided the female audience with a sassy and dominating female protagonist. This seemingly independent image of womanhood, however, is compromised in the Röck film, with the main female protagonist longing for romance and a homely life, instead of a popular life in the public eye. The private sphere was subtly made attractive to a wartime female audience, who longed for an alternative existence to their own. This dual aspect of the Röck character in the film is emphasised by Jacoby, who demonstrates that, whilst external appearances denote that the fiery female is dangerous, a more homely side is underneath, which appears only when the character finds true love and compromises her personality, subduing the external manipulative aspects of her character and allowing her true self to come through. This image serves to explore the duality of the feminine disposition. Women, whilst maintaining a strong external personae, long to be subjugated and adored by a strong male character, demonstrating that women are indeed controlled by emotion. Once the strong male has asserted himself over the more dominant side of the Röck character, she warms to him, allowing him to perceive her alternative and inner self. The 'true' side to the Röck character is only revealed in the closing scenes of the film. The audience is left to speculate as to her true identity, creating the necessary suspense surrounding

the female protagonist. The masculine attributes and independence act as a mask, disguising Röck's true desire to enter into the private sphere, as a wife, a homemaker and companion to her male counterpart. This desire of a star to become involved in the private sphere of home life provided a certain degree of contentment to the home-front woman and conformed to the desired propagandistic image of women in the Reich. Although the producers of the 1940s musical contended that their light-hearted musical and romantic comedies were 'pure entertainment', in essence, their films presented an acceptable face for female subjugation and a light-hearted portrait of the gender-divide in the Reich.

In *Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten* (1941), Röck played Marie Luise Parry, the niece of a casino owner in the town of Homberg. The local army, headed by the *Rittmeister* von Karstein (Willy Fritsch) has been instructed to close the casino. Parry presents herself to Karstein in the opening scenes, becoming a spy for her uncle and seizing the army's plans for the closure of his enterprise. The following day, Parry returns as an ambassador for Homberg, intending to negotiate an agreement with Karstein. The agreement is to be signed at Homberg and Karstein and his men travel to the town, much to the pleasure of the local women. The film then details the relationship between Parry and Karstein, which has to overcome certain obstacles such as a duel with Gagorsky, a patron of the casino, over the affections of Parry, until they finally discover love for one another. The film ends with the closure of the casino, saving Karstein's rank in the army, and the subjugation of the manipulative Parry, throwing her finally into the arms of the *Rittmeister*.

The image of the manipulative woman, who uses her charms to lure men and deceive them is fostered in the guise of Marie Luise Parry, and it is this image which will be explored in particular in this section. A common trait of the Röck characters of the 1940s was their fiery temperament, sensuality and attraction to the opposite sex, disguising their true desire to be a wife, leading to their eventual subjugation. At first appearances, the Röck character possesses the qualities of the career woman, with an independent streak, able to manipulate both men and women to suit their will. The image, however, is compromised in the final scenes of the film, when the character's career is abandoned in order to pursue a life outside of the theatre, with a simple man with a simple profession.

In *Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten*, the image of the manipulative woman is presented from the opening scenes. On learning of the intention to close the casino, Parry's uncle sends her on a mission to recover the plans from the army, and Marie Luise is despatched to Karstein. On her arrival, Karstein insists that she stay the night and makes sure that she is confined to the barracks. The different characters of Karstein, the honest, straight-laced and staid army officer, and Parry, the manipulative, seductive female, are juxtaposed in their first scenes together with comic effect:

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- Karstein: Wouldn't you like to be a little more comfortable?
Parry: [Manipulative] It is a little strange for me to spend a night here alone with a man. Especially when I am his prisoner.
Karstein: You have no need to worry. I have to work the whole night through.
Parry: [Seductively] And what am I supposed to amuse myself with?
Karstein: With sleep. Early to bed gives you strong nerves and a strong character.

Parry makes several attempts to escape with the plans. Karstein is suspicious of Marie Luise's intentions and keeps a close eye on her. Karstein invites Marie Luise to stay in his room, which is simple but functional, covered in dust, suggesting the lack of a woman's touch. Maria launches into her theme tune for the film. Whilst Karstein prepares her omelette, she is conspiring to open the window and prepare everything for her imminent escape. Parry purposely stops singing to worry Karstein. He charges back into the room, only to find that he has been duped by Parry, who is hiding under the table. With a sarcastic expression on her face, Parry returns to the piano and sings her theme tune. Parry further manipulates Karstein, using the guise of the 'perfect woman' in order to entice him further and revealing her home-loving character for the first time.

- Karstein: I thought that you had left.
Parry: Without food? Never!
Karstein: I totally forgot! [Runs out of the door]
Parry: I'll come with you. Cooking is a thing for housewives.

Marie Luise teases Karstein about his manliness, forcing Karstein to doubt himself. The film demonstrates the gender character divisions, with females initially portrayed as the manipulative and cunning sex, men as the vain and weaker sex, with the film's conclusion proving decisively that the opposite is true. Men subjugate and women submit. Initially, women are permitted to believe that they are the manipulators:

- Parry: You are no diplomat. I can't imagine it!
Karstein: You don't know me at all.
Parry: Unfortunately. I think women are much better diplomats than men.
Karstein: Ah, you mean that men are much more honest than women ?
Parry: Men are just as much swindlers as women.

In the following scenes, Parry once again tests Karstein's ability to perform manly tasks, playing on his gender to make him weak. It is Karstein's own vanity which eventually offers Parry her means of escape. Parry cleverly plays on male

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TO THE PRINTED EDITION**

Figure 15. Parry and Karstein in the 'manipulation' scene. BAFA 5719

weaknesses, manipulating Karstein *gradually* and so subtly that he fails to notice her scheme. Calling him into the bedroom, Parry invents a series of masculine tasks for Karstein to perform. Failure to perform the tasks set for him by the beautiful Parry would indicate a loss of his masculinity. Karstein is also weakened by the dual effect of Parry's manipulation, which plays both upon her sexuality and her weakness as a woman. Firstly, Parry claims that there are mice in the bedroom, inviting Karstein to rid them for her. She claims that her pulse is racing and asks him to feel her heartbeat, initiating the first physical contact between them:

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Parry: That's calmed me down.

Karstein: What has?

Parry: Your warm hand has calmed me down. I don't sleep so well all alone . . . [He places his hand on her head. Parry plays the little girl] I feel like a young girl again . . . [Strongly] Oh you are so . . . you wouldn't understand. I love men with strong arms and many muscles. I find it divine when a man is well defined. That is wonderful. So wonderfully manly. What a shame it is that you are not well defined . . . [He goes to leave. Parry craftily] You can rest assured that a woman is not dangerous. Thank God.

Parry's last utterance is intended as a warning to Karstein, which he does not heed. During the next entrance Parry makes, she catches Karstein lifting a chair, attempting to improve his 'definition'. This indicates to Parry that her manipulation of Karstein is a success. Parry then pleads for him to come and talk to her in the bedroom. She lifts her skirt far enough to entice Karstein. Complaining that the moon is in her eyes, she asks Karstein to move the bed, which he does only too willingly, commenting, 'But of course. Finally the opportunity to prove my masculinity.' Playing the weak female, Parry has to leave the room, claiming that she has seasickness as Karstein moves the bed. As Karstein 'proves his masculinity', Parry steals the plans and exits via the window.

Parry's manipulation succeeds and she delivers the attack plans of Karstein's division to her uncle, the casino owner. As a paradox, the emotional side of women is demonstrated by the relationship between Karstein's butler, Karl, and his girlfriend, with Karl emphasising that the love between them has a certain time and place:

Girl: Will you stay true to me?

Karl: [Not listening] Yes, my darling.

Girl: Tell me you'll never forget me!

Karl: Yes, my darling! Pass me a plate please.

Girl: Oh, Karl. Yesterday evening was so wonderful. No man has ever pleased me the way you do ! [She kisses him] Can I have another little kiss?

Karl: Another little kiss! The another little kiss! Can't you see what I have to do here! Sleeping together is sleeping together but duty is duty!

Indeed, Karl and his girlfriend take every opportunity in the film to have sex. They are portrayed on many occasions rolling out of bushes, postponing errands, and climbing through each other's windows late at night, avoiding the watchful eye of their masters. This is true to the rustic vision of illicit love, which is not frowned upon by the films of the Reich. Alternatively, it is perceived as a

healthy pastime between members of the Aryan race, resulting in an abundant population.

Meanwhile, Parry has been sent as the parliamentary diplomat for Homberg. Her uncle is hoping that Parry will use her feminine wiles to negotiate a favourable outcome for his casino. Parry however is caught out by her own manipulations, finding herself attracted to Karstein. Parry assumes the role of the female political diplomat, although the film does not offer the image of Parry as a serious politician, including no scenes of the negotiations for the preservation of the Casino.

Later, Parry performs at the ball and is applauded wherever she goes. She is constantly surrounded by men. This attention attracts Karstein and the mayor's wife attempts to dissuade him from her, illustrating that much male attention also invites much female jealousy:

- Karstein: A beautiful woman, that Parry.
Mayor's wife: Hmm. Very beautiful but also very dangerous. As much for
 women as for men.
Karstein: Why for women?
Mayor's wife: Because she snaps the men away from them!

Once again attempting to manipulate Karstein's emotions, Parry tries to make him jealous by spending the evening with another man, Gagorsky, who tells her, 'tonight, Marie Luise, you will be my mascot.' Flirting outrageously with Gagorsky and slyly glancing at Karstein, she coos, 'tonight you'll most definitely be lucky!' Gambling with Gagorsky, Parry enquires after Karstein, immediately abandoning Gagorsky when she discovers that Karstein has left. Marie Luise demonstrates an essential trait of the flirtatious Röck character. Having used Gagorsky and learning that the object of her desire has left without paying her any attention, Parry discards Gagorsky and claims she is tired. In order to keep Gagorsky available for any other opportunities, she retains his interest when he asks to see her the following day by answering, 'Perhaps.'

On returning home, Parry immediately seeks out Karstein, who is confiding to his right-hand man that, 'She came to me as my prisoner when in reality she was a spy. Then she comes to me as a politician, when in reality she is my love.' Parry begins to sing, attracting Karstein once again for a further attempt at manipulation. Karstein has tolerated Parry's games until now, and decides to take charge of the situation. He summarises Parry's character in the plot so far, informing her that she has been 'beautiful, dangerous, but cold'. This changes shortly after, as the film reveals Parry's true character, extracted when Karstein uses an authoritative, masculine tone with her, demonstrating that the only way to deal with the independent and fiery woman is to take command:

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Karstein: Do you love me or not?
Parry: [Still toying with him] I don't know yet.
Karstein: I'm going to ask you one last time . . .
Parry: Yes.

They are interrupted by Karl and his girlfriend falling into the lake. Parry runs into her room and bolts the door, locking the amorous Karstein out. The next scene together demonstrates Parry's submission to the army officer, playing the role of the housewife, in an attempt to please him. Karstein, however, is still reeling from the previous night's rejection:

Parry: Perhaps a little coffee? Perhaps another piece of bread? Maybe a cushion for your back? Garden chairs are so uncomfortable . . . Do you have any wishes? Can I do anything for you at all? Ahh, morning conversations! Eating breakfast together! You're hardly answering me at all and reading the newspaper. It's as if we're already married!
Karstein: What an unhappy marriage!
Parry: [Avoiding the subject] Can I read the newspaper?
Karstein: No. Yesterday night?
Parry: What about yesterday night?
Karstein: You would be a disappointment for a so-called husband last night.
Parry: For a husband, yes.
Karstein: Why did you run away so quickly yesterday?
Parry: I always do when it is dangerous!
Karstein: But I thought you loved danger.

Parry loses her hard edge and when asked by Karstein about her male admirers, she explains to him that as a dancer she has many men at her feet. With regards to her private life, she tells him, 'I only want attention from one person alone.' This is in accordance with the softening of the Röck character. She rejects her professional attentions to ease the jealousy of her intended spouse. This is an integral part of the subjugation of the fiery and independent career woman.

Karl receives an order to close the casino. Parry reads the document and is caught by Karstein, who feels deceived by her. In order to escape closure, Parry's uncle turns the casino into a private members club. When Karstein arrives to close the gambling house, he is frustrated by the new arrangement and enters only to find Gagorsky attacking Parry. After her departure, he challenges Gagorsky to a duel, proving his masculinity to Parry. He does it of his own accord, without enticement from Parry. She attempts to tell Karstein of her true feelings. He rejects her after her apparent betrayal. As he enters the building, unbeknown to Karstein, Parry breaks down into tears, showing that she is indeed an emotional female at

heart. Her inner character is revealed. In a farcical end sequence, Parry hears of the duel and spends frantic hours awaiting the outcome. Karstein wins and Gagorsky is injured. Meanwhile, Parry receives news that if the casino is not closed within twenty-four hours, Karstein will be stripped of his officer status. She petitions her uncle and the casino is closed. Karstein returns and reclaims Parry's love.

Marie Luise Parry is a good example of the typical Rökk character. Initially, she is impetuous and hot headed, with an artistic temperament. Parry is obsessed with her own attractiveness, her career as a dancer and the fame it generates. She is described as dangerous and cold. She is flirtatious with men in order to incite jealousy in others, often finding herself in trouble as a direct result, and requiring the intervention of a man in order to save her from her self-induced situations. She is blatant in her sexuality and uses her sensualism and beauty to manipulate men. She is knowledgeable in her manipulation of men and displays a great deal of cunning and intelligence in her techniques. As Parry falls in love, the harsh exterior is gradually stripped away to reveal an emotional character, which is purely feminine. Parry becomes a homemaker and a loyal lover, muted by her love for a simple, but strong man, rejecting the high-minded and rich lovers she attracts as an artist. The film plays on role reversal, with the initial perception of the weak male manipulated by the strong female exchanged for the subjugation of the female protagonist by the inner strength of her male counterpart at the end of the piece. This plot and characterisation was repeated three years later in Jacoby's portrayal of Julia Köster in *Die Frau meiner Träume*.

***Die Frau meiner Träume* (The Woman of my Dreams, Georg Jacoby, 1944, Agfacolor)**

Rökk's last film for the Reich, *Die Frau meiner Träume*, filmed in Agfacolor, was yet another musical-based film, intended to elevate the realities of existence in a war-torn state. The film began production in late 1943, with the script due to be proofread by the film censor at the end of January 1944.⁴⁷ By June of that year, the film was being exported to the major European Occupied Territories, along with the more propagandistic productions of Veit Harlan such as *Immenssee*, *Opfergang* and *Kolberg*. All four films were exported to Spain,⁴⁸ Portugal⁴⁹ and Finland⁵⁰ amongst others. Rökk claimed that her films were easily exported as they were devoid of political content.⁵¹ That her films were sold alongside those of Harlan, suggests that the Reich was not purely exporting 'entertainment' or escapist films. *Die Frau meiner Träume* did offer some comment on the wartime situation, satirising the lack of clothing and foodstuffs in the Reich, as well as offering a similar portrait of the feminine disposition as *Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten*.

The success of the film, however, was based more on the combination of the musical and comedic genres, epitomised by the inclusion of both Röck and Grethe Weiser in the cast list. Women were also prominent comediennes in the Third Reich, and none more so than Weiser, whose characterisation of the *Berlinerin* became a well-recognised monument of German film. Weiser was often cast as the comic sidekick to the heroine. Brassy and chatty, she kept the dialogue moving, bantering with her on-screen colleagues. Weiser epitomised her character in *Liese und Miese*, a programme designed for the female audience in wartime to precede the *Wochenschau*. The short film was to deal with ‘contemporary problems and daily events in . . . the Nazi regime’.⁵² Hans Borgelt, Weiser’s official biographer, claimed that the series used ‘actors that were not easily identifiable with Hitler’s ideology’,⁵³ although Weiser had been a member of the NSDAP since 1933.⁵⁴ Weiser was cast as the ever-complaining Miese. Borgelt explained:

‘*Liese und Miese*’ was shown in all cinemas before the *Wochenschauen*. [They were] two women, who would squabble about war associated restrictions. Liese defended the actions of the Government and took an overwhelmingly optimistic, victorious stance . . . Miese agitates to the contrary, to oppose; in short to always find something lousy in everything.⁵⁵

Contrary to Goebbels’ intentions, the public took to the character of ‘the beloved Miese . . . and not to the lovely, blonde and Teutonic Liese’.⁵⁶ In the production of *Liese und Miese*, Weiser had created a loyal fan following and promoted the role of the comedienne in the film industry.

Weiser’s popularity was combined with the musical and choreographed talents of the queen of the German musical, Marika Röck, in Jacoby’s 1944 production. *Die Frau meiner Träume* tells the story of Julia Köster (Marika Röck), a famous stage performer, who longs for a holiday and to escape her overzealous director (Georg Alexander). Her friend Luise (Grethe Weiser) conspires to help her escape. In a rush to leave the theatre, Julia arrives at the station with only her underwear under her coat. A farcical train journey ensues, with Köster disembarking the train in the middle of nowhere. Julia is abandoned and is forced to spend the night with two engineers, Erwin Foster (Walther Müller) and his boss, Peter Groll (Wolfgang Lukschy), hiding her true identity from them. Julia, anxious to begin her holiday, seeks to escape from the mountains, but ends up having to stay with the engineers. Gradually, Julia falls in love with Peter, a simple and staid man, who does not care for Julia’s fiery temperament. Julia toys with Erwin in order to make Peter jealous and succeeds. Peter and Julia fall in love. Their bliss is interrupted by the appearance of Luise and the director, and the truth emerges about Julia’s stardom. Peter feels betrayed by Julia’s dishonesty and rejects her. Julia returns to the stage. Peter discovers that he is unable to live without her and attends a performance. The couple are reunited.

The film opens with a portrait of the typical Rökk character, manipulative and overtly sexual. Julia Köster descends a staircase, dressed in black with a flash of red in her hair and on her dress. Julia begins to sing an erotic song, intended to lure the men in the audience: *People don't like to be alone at Night*. Köster is draped across a staircase, dancing and singing provocatively and dressed to suit the song. Rökk recalls that Goebbels opposed the dress and actions of Julia Köster in a later scene, commenting that:

Later in *Frau meiner Träume*, we took the initiative to perform a Spanish dance. I wore a black, close fitting dress, with a low neckline, which had some black netting which went a bit across the face. From the hem, there was a big slit and it was possible to see my legs. Today, such an outfit would pass for the 'Grandma-look' at best, but then it was reprimanded for being 'too erotic.' [Goebbels said] 'That is frivolous. A German woman does not dance that way.' The costume stayed as it was. The number became the highpoint of the Revue.⁵⁷

It is surprising that the number stayed in the film, given Goebbels' objections to Rökk's dress. As evidenced by Harlan's films, Goebbels actively edited film texts, scenarios and scenes. That Goebbels objected suggests that even 'entertainment' films were intended to portray a particular image of women to the predominantly female audience in 1944, with the regime promoting the homely woman and not the 'erotic siren'. The Rökk character, epitomised by Marie Luise Parry and Julia Köster, conformed at the end of each film to the image of the homemaker, wife and companion the Reich Minister desired. However, the scene appeared in the final cut of the film, with no apparent alteration to Rökk's dance or costume, suggesting that Goebbels was either only insistent when dealing with overtly political films or was too busy to either ensure that his wishes were implemented or deal directly with the 1944 Jacoby production. In January 1944, when the film reached the censor, Goebbels was involved in the production of his war epic, *Kolberg* (1945), and the turn in military fortunes of the Third Reich, as attested to by his diary entries for the final years of the war.

Clothing is an important aspect of *Die Frau meiner Träume*, at a time when fashion became dictated by war and the introduction of *Aus Zwei mach Eins* (From two make one), a similar scheme to the British equivalent, Make Do and Mend. In the film, emphasis is placed on the form of costume worn by Köster, who loses her luggage and is forced to 'make do and mend', creating outfits from Peter's wardrobe and even his curtains. The colouring of Köster's clothing dictates the mood of the piece and the changing character of Julia. In these first scenes, Julia is wearing the clothes of a dangerous woman; a tight-fitting black silk dress, with a red slip underneath, red earrings, a red necklace and wearing a red rose in her red hair. The combination of red and black and the erotic nature of both the outfit and the song denote that, at the outset of the film, Julia is a *femme fatale*. During

the opening number, Julia shows a manipulative side to her character. Her lover in the song attempts to restrain Julia from running away with a band of men. She pretends to flirt with her lover, who lets down his defences. As soon as her male counterpart in the piece weakens, she pushes him away, jumping on the vehicle to make a speedy getaway. Julia climbs into a hat box and emerges dressed as a can-can girl. This scene is filmed in rich colours, with Julia dressed in black and cream, with blonde hair. Pushing men away from her, the scene ends with Julia's face framed in a heart with the motto, '*Frau ohne Herz*' (The Woman without a Heart). This sets the scene for her encounter with Peter and Erwin.

The film then switches to Julia's dressing room, where she is preparing to make a hasty retreat from the theatre. *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* stresses the necessity for a break, stating that 'she has only one wish: To have no new engagements and to go on holiday.'⁵⁸ As soon as the show is finished, however, the director begins to make plans for Julia's next performance, stressing the erotic nature of her show:

Director: I have a fantastic idea for our next revue. Imagine. The entire stage is an ostentatious bedroom [Interrupted by the arrival of Julia's taxi. He carries on regardless] In the bedroom – a bed . . . And in this bed – in a gold lamé night dress – you! Then you awake and in comes . . . [Interrupted again]

In her hurry to leave, Julia fails to put her dress on, heading for the station in her underwear under her fur coat. The director attempts to prevent Julia from leaving. The conductor is confused as to whether Julia is travelling or not and allocates her cabin to a middle-aged man. The train leaves with Julia on board, but without her luggage, which the director has requisitioned. Julia is left on the train without a cabin, without clothes, money or a ticket. The conductor asks Julia to change carriage at the next stop. The train stops at signals and mistaking this stop for a station, Julia disembarks. The train leaves and Julia finds herself in the middle of nowhere. Julia is directed to the cabin of the local engineers, Erwin Foster and Peter Groll. Characteristically, Peter is working on the building plans and Erwin is listening to Julia Köster on the radio, singing '*People don't like to be alone at Night*'.

Erwin: Peter, that's Köster . . . That voice is wonderful. [Erwin picks up two pencils and erasers. He performs a little dance with the implements] What a great person she must be. I'd like to get to know her.
Peter: I wouldn't.
Erwin: You have no sense of true art!
Peter: Art, yes, but not for your little fashion models!

Peter forms an opinion of Köster even before their first encounter. He is attracted by more simple women, whilst Erwin dwells on fashion, external appearances, sexuality and fame as his main criteria for defining femininity. Their conversation is interrupted by a voice crying for help. It is the voice of Julia Köster, Erwin's radio heroine. Julia has been knocked unconscious by an avalanche, caused by an explosion during the building work, and is carried to their cabin by the two engineers. Erwin is besotted with the beautiful stranger, intrigued by the circumstances in which she came to them. In discussing the stranger, Erwin emphasises her sexuality, whilst Peter concentrates on her well-being. On awaking, Julia does not endear herself to the staid Peter, by accusing him of blowing her up. Röck reverts to her traditional manipulative character, using her feminine wiles to charm Peter. Peter, however, is not interested in the machinations of the mischievous woman. Having already infuriated Peter, Julia demands that Peter or Erwin take her by motorcycle to the nearest station. Peter refuses, citing the weather and the time of night as his reasons. Like Parry in *Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten*, Köster asserts her own independence and challenges Peter's masculinity, attempting to manipulate him into taking her to the station.

Julia's fiery impetuosity and independence forces Peter to take an instant dislike to her, whilst Erwin finds her all the more attractive. Peter gives Julia his bed for the night, leaves her his pyjamas to wear and storms out to sleep in Erwin's cabin. Erwin, however, is more reluctant to leave and spends the entire night fantasising about Julia:

Erwin: You can say what you want. She is a fine woman!

Peter: [Sarcastically] Yes, a fine woman!

Erwin: A really fine woman. The fur is real class and the slip . . . ahhh!

Peter: No, no, no. Don't you think that the fur might be stolen?

Erwin: Oh, I ask you! No, such a woman would not find herself in such . . . a situation. Perhaps she is running from her husband?

Peter: Or the police.

Erwin: Oh, you always think the worst.

Peter: What good should we think of a woman who leaves the house without a dress on?

Erwin: That is top secret! I love women who have great adventures . . . You have no fantasies.

Peter: In the middle of the night? No!

As the men sleep, Köster makes an attempt to escape. Wearing Peter's clothes, a further comment on wartime shortages, Julia steals his motorcycle and heads for the town. She is caught by another explosion and is blown clean off the bike. Julia is forced to return. The next morning, a local girl who comes to cook breakfast for

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Erwin and Peter enters to find a strange woman in Peter's bed. Once again, the morality of the Rökk character is asserted. Whilst the character is often outrageously flirtatious, her basic morality remains intact:

Girl: What are you doing here?

Julia: I've come to visit thingy.

Girl: Is he sleeping here?

Julia: [Affronted] No!

Girl: Where is he sleeping then?

Julia: [Pointing to Erwin's cabin] Over there!

The woman goes to make breakfast for the two engineers. She also prepares a tray for Julia. In a comment on wartime meat shortages, Peter inspects the tray before Julia receives it, commenting, 'Yes, that's enough. But the bacon stays here!' After breakfast, Peter discovers that the motorcycle is missing and storms in to confront their strange guest about its disappearance. Rökk once again reverts to the manipulative and sly female character, flirting in order to charm Peter. She uses her sexuality and feminine wiles, sitting in a bath and pouting at Peter, in order to cover up her crime.

Peter's anger is now at its height and Julia's manipulation of him is having some effect. Erwin attempts to drive Julia back to the station but the bike breaks down. Whilst on the journey, Erwin tells her that both he and Peter listen to Julia Köster, but that 'Peter likes very simple women.' Julia decides to return to the cabin and continue her holiday there, feeling that she can make some mischief and manipulate Peter into liking her.

Meanwhile, Luise has reached the nearest station, bringing Julia's luggage with her. Unbeknown to her she has been followed by the director, who insists on waiting until Julia arrives. The two of them sit down in the station and Jacoby inserts yet another scene commenting on wartime shortages:

Director: We've been sitting here five hours.

Luise: I told you she wasn't coming!

Director: Isn't there anything edible in her luggage? I must eat something.
What can we get in here?

Waiter: Beer, lemonade, or soda water?

Director: Haven't you got anything to eat?

Waiter: Cheese.

Director: Nothing else?

Waiter: No.

Director: Give us cheese then! [Waiter goes to the cabinet and brings out a solitary piece of cheese.]

Director: Oh no! It's Tilsit. The only cheese I don't eat.

Julia and Erwin experience similar eating problems. The food at the construction site canteen is also rationed and Erwin collects Peter's portion to give to Julia. Peter comes in, discovers this and takes Erwin's portion. In 'brotherly spirit', Julia offers to share her soup with Erwin. Julia begins to sing for the canteen and all join in, except Peter, who is beginning to soften to the charms of Köster.

Sensing that Peter is succumbing, Julia decides to manipulate his emotions further. Employing her usual trick of using another man to make the object of her desires jealous, Rökk's character once again relies on her sexuality to attract both males. That evening, whilst Peter is trying to work, she agrees to drink champagne and dance with Erwin. Disturbed by the noise and concerned for Julia, Peter makes an excuse to visit them, pretending to need the production plans. Julia wants an evening dress and retires to the bathroom. She emerges seconds later in an evening gown constructed from the bathroom curtains, demonstrating to the female wartime audience that it is possible to look stunning by making clothing out of even the most mundane items. Flirting with Erwin, she begins to sing a provocative song, 'I love all men', and drinks champagne, pretending to be drunk, commenting, 'if I drink, I always laugh.' When Peter leaves and Julia's objective is achieved, she rejects Erwin, telling him exactly what Marie Luise Parry told Gagorsky in *Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten*, 'I am tired. I want to sleep.' When Erwin, like Gagorsky, persists, the Rökk character runs to her hero for assistance. Further manipulating Peter, Julia begins to cry and protests that Erwin was 'being cheeky towards me.' Peter and Julia discuss his profession, of which she shows little understanding, but falsely claims that she believes his work to be 'a wonderful career'. Naturally, being a gentleman, Peter gives her his bed, whilst he is forced to return for a further night in Erwin's cabin.

The following day, the Rökk character moves into the second manipulative stage; the attempt at being a perfect woman. Julia swaps her fur coat for the farming girl's clothes and impresses Peter by pretending to be the simple woman of his dreams. She offers to cook for him that night. Peter tells her that she is an angel. Commenting on the feminine disposition, and using her sexuality as a further extension of her manipulative technique, Julia comments: 'I'm not an angel but I'm not a devil either. I'm simply a woman . . . and I only want to cook for you.' Julia, unable to cook herself, obtains the meal from the canteen, telling Peter that 'a way to a man's heart is through his stomach'. The Rökk character uses once again a false identity and manipulation to obtain the affections of the man she loves. Peter falls in love with this woman who he believes to 'have shown much interest in his profession and in housework'.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, the director has found her hiding place and, characteristically, Julia decides to leave the stage for her newly found love, telling the director that 'I am never appearing on the stage again . . . I'm getting married.' Once again, the Rökk character is subdued and her career jettisoned for the love of a man. The emotional female emerges from a harsh and manipulative exterior. The female protagonist is again undone by her own machinations, entrapping herself rather than her intended victim. However, the Rökk character must be temporarily punished at the end of the piece, having to endure a forced separation from her loved one as a direct result of her dishonesty and manipulative character, demonstrating that women cannot achieve anything by the emotional blackmail of their male counterparts. In *Die Frau meiner Träume*, when Peter discovers Julia's true identity, he rejects her, preferring the sweet, home-loving woman he fell in love with, rather than the star of the stage.

Julia: Are you angry with me?

Peter: Why should I be? One must have his fun. I understand that.

Julia: Fun? This is serious.

Peter: You are a big star, Fräulein Köster. Wherever you go men fall at your feet. I am a small time engineer. I would rather have my innocent girl with the golden heart.

Julia leaves and resumes her career on the stage for the final scenes, which show Julia in her new revue, entitled *Die Frau meiner Träume*. Erwin has tickets to the performance and goes alone, as Peter refuses to join him. At the last minute, Peter changes his mind and sees the show, after a farcical scene in which Erwin sells his ticket and spends the rest of the performance attempting to retrieve it.

The final revue sees Rökk in various scenarios, attempting to recreate male fantasies. She dances her way through various lands sympathetic to Nazism (Japan, Spain and Italy) and finally concludes the revue as a bride. The final image of Julia Köster on the stage is prophetic. After the show, she returns to find Peter in her dressing room. He asks her whether she loves him, to which she stubbornly answers, 'no'. Once again, male assertiveness is the only response to the fiery and independent female character. After having declared his love for her, Peter leaves the theatre. Köster is forced to chase after him, declaring her true feelings for him and submitting to the simple engineer in the final scenes of the film.

Conclusions

The women portrayed by Rökk on the screen, Kora Terry, Marie Luise Parry and Julia Köster, all have the same character: all three are dancers as a profession. This is primarily as a vehicle exploiting Rökk's talents, in the same way that the

majority of Zarah Leander's characters were singers. All three women are impetuous, hot-headed, manipulative, obsessed with their own careers and attractiveness. All three women have an artistic temperament and are famous with men falling at their feet. All three women are described as 'dangerous' women, which is reflected in the case of Terry and Köster in their clothing, dance styles and choice of songs. Kora Terry, whilst possessing many of the characteristics of the typical Rökk character is unable to be redeemed and presented as rotten to the core. Parry and Köster are defined initially by their capacity to use their sexuality to manipulate men. They play the same tricks and have the same manipulative techniques. They both use other men to attract their desired male, often flirting with their acquaintances to stir up jealousy. This often leads the Rökk character into uncomfortable situations. As a result, both characters are forced to turn to men to rescue them from unwanted attentions, which both Parry and Köster have induced. Both Parry and Köster are attracted to simple men (a soldier and engineer by profession), with a strong exterior, able to cope with her machinations. The Rökk character is often despised by her male counterpart at the outset, who is gradually charmed by her childish games, beauty and talent. As the relationship develops, the Rökk character opens up to show that behind a hard and manipulative exterior, she is an emotional and loving woman. This is demonstrated in a number of compromises. Both Parry and Köster make an attempt to move away from the stage and into the home in order to impress their intended spouse. It is at this point that the balance of the relationship switches. At the outset, both Parry and Köster play strong, impetuous and independent women, who are able to manipulate male attention. By the end of the film, their temperament has been muted by love. Their hot and stormy side is underpinned by the desire to be loved by one man only, rejecting the attentions of all her admirers. Both Parry and Köster jettison their career at the end of the film. The image offered a seemingly light-hearted insight into the feminine character, which defined femininity through emotions and attracted the home-front audience. The films, whilst essentially escapist musicals, were tinged with Nazi ideology pertaining to the perceived spheres of female influence and their inherent nature, convincing the wartime female audience that a life conducted in the private sphere was ultimately more profitable, satisfying and attractive to men than the life of a famous *femme fatale*. The Rökk character only found happiness as a homemaker and as the wife of a simple husband. The films used the entertainment and musical genre to pass comment on contemporary hardships, creating a sense of audience identification; *Die Frau meiner Träume* encouraged women to recycle clothing, with Köster mainly dressed in men's attire and a dress made from bathroom curtains. The film also presented food rationing as the 'norm', with cheese and bacon limited and the food in the engineer's canteen rationed. Köster set an example to the audience by sharing her ration with Erwin in a 'brotherly spirit'. Parry and Köster, whilst difficult, were viewed as harmless

portrayals of women, as they demonstrated that a truly feminine side was at the heart of their character. Kora Terry, on the other hand, was evil to the core and finds her punishment in death. This draconian punishment in the musical reflected the trend in the dramatic genre of the films produced under National Socialism.

Notes

- 1 BAP NS18/357. RPL to Tießler. 13 November 1942. GP/Ir/St.
- 2 BAP R55/000601 TKB, 19 December 1944.
- 3 Lochner, L., *op.cit.*, p. 440.
- 4 IWMD. Goebbels Diary fragments. AL 2604/1/2 8 February – 7 March 1942. Here 13 February 1942. p. 20.
- 5 IWMD. Goebbels Diary fragments. AL 2604/1/2 8 February – 7 March 1942. Here 27 February 1942.
- 6 BAP NS18/357. Tießler to Hippler. Quoting Reich Chancellery document from a report by the *Gauleitung* of Brandenburg. Berlin, 24 June 1942. Ti/Ge/Rth.
- 7 Hans Albers caused great distress to RMVP officials in May 1943. Goebbels and Hinkel, alarmed at Albers' arrogance, suggested suitable actions to be taken against Albers as a result. On 3 May 1943, Hinkel suggested to Goebbels that the RMVP curb Albers' 'eccentric behaviour' and should give him 'an effective shower' forcing him to reconsider 'as a state actor what our Reich and Germany represents to him'. NAW T70 R78. IB/1375/07 Disciplinary Offences. Hinkel to Goebbels. 3 May 1943. Pers. 1375-07/03.5.43/43263.
- 8 BAP R55/879. Copy of the twenty-fifth Anniversary celebrations for Ufa to Goebbels. February 1943.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 For a discussion of the American influence on film see Rentschler, E., *op.cit.*, pp. 99–122. A study of *Glückskinder*.
- 11 Welch, D., *Propaganda and the German Cinema, op.cit.*, p. 43.
- 12 BAP R58/699. SD report no. 32. 4 December 1942. Screening of German Films in the Ukraine.
- 13 BAP R56 VI/5. RFI Dr Müller-Goerne to RFK Fachschaft Film. 30 August 1943. Dr. MG/Scho.
- 14 BAP R56 VI/5. Dr Müller-Goerne to Alberti. 6 January 1944. Dr. MG/Scho.
- 15 Dr Günther Sawatzki, 'Grazie, Rhythmus Paprika! Tänzerinnen der Leinwand,' in *Filmwelt* Special Issue. 19 January 1940. Nr. 3.
- 16 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series I, Vol. 2), p. 187. 27 June 1937.

- 17 Rolf Weiser, 'La Jana gestorben', in *Filmwelt*. 29 March 1940. No. 13.
- 18 Rökk, M., *Herz mit Paprika. Erinnerungen*. (Universitas, Munich, 1988), pp. 132–3.
- 19 BDC File of Marika Rökk RKK 2705. Box 0005. File 05. Interrogation of Rökk. 25 July 1946.
- 20 BAP R55/879. Programme of the twenty-fifth Anniversary celebrations for Ufa. 3–5 March 1943. See p. 111 for full listings.
- 21 BAP R55/661. RFI Hinkel to Goebbels. New Fees Listings 1944. 10 November 1944. Berlin.
- 22 BAP R56 VI/5. Dr Müller-Goerne to all film concerns. 22 October 1942. Dr. MG/Hei.
- 23 Rökk, M., *op.cit.*, p. 135.
- 24 BDC Marika Rökk File. RKK 2600. Box 0170. File 25. Telegram to Hitler from Marika Rökk and Georg Jacoby. *Zu ers.* 93 42 31 2030. To the Führer at Obersalzburg. 1 January 1940.
- 25 BDC Marika Rökk File. RKK 2600. Box 0170. File 25. Telegram to the Führer from Rökk. 12 November 1940.
- 26 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series I, Vol. 3), p. 378. 22 December 1937.
- 27 BAP NS18/352. Installation of a Film Screening Room in the Bunker. 1944.
- 28 BAP R55/665. RR. Heinrichsdorff /E11 Minsteramt to Hinkel. 21 November 1944.
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 Dr Günther Sawatzski. 'Grazie, Rhythmus Paprika! Tänzerinnen der Leinwand', in *Filmwelt*. 19 January 1940. No. 3.
- 31 Rentschler, E., *Ministry of Illusion. op.cit.*, p. 4.
- 32 Rökk, M., *op.cit.*, p. 140.
- 33 *Ibid.*
- 34 *Ibid.*
- 35 Romani, C., *op.cit.*, p. 169 quoting Kreuder, P., *Nur Puppen haben keine Tränen: Ein Lebensbericht*. (Bergisch Gladbach, 1973).
- 36 To be discussed later in this section. For an analysis concentrating on the role of clothing in Rökk's 1944 production, *Frau meiner Träume*, see Warth, E. M., 'The Reconceptualisation of Women's Roles in War-Time National Socialism. An Analysis of *Die Frau meiner Träume*', in Taylor, B. and Van der Wijk, W., *The Nazification of Art. Art, Design, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich*. (Winchester Press, 1990), pp. 219–31.
- 37 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*. No. 3156. BAFA file on *Kora Terry*.
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 H.J. Ulbricht, in *Filmnachrichten*, 31 November 1940. Quoted in Romani, C., *op.cit.*, p. 169.

- 41 Rökk, M., *op.cit.*, p. 136.
- 42 This is contended by David Welch in *Propaganda and the German Cinema*, *op.cit.*, and *Politics and Propaganda*, *op.cit.*
- 43 H.O.F. 'Rhythmus und Rausch des Tages. "Kora Terry" – der Film einer Tänzerin', in *Filmwelt*. 6 December 1940. No. 49.
- 44 Boelcke, W., *op.cit.*, p. 3. Goebbels wrote on 6 November 1939: 'Dr. Hippler is instructed to withdraw American feature films from public showing.' Hippler objected to this. Under increasing pressure from the SD, Goebbels called for the ban again in February 1940, when he was warned of the financial implications of this action. On 10 April of that year, Goebbels demanded a draft proposal on the ban and was once again frustrated by Hippler's lack of compliance. The ban was finally implemented on 28 February 1941.
- 45 'Erster Drehtag bei "Kora Terry"', in *Filmwelt*, 19 April 1940. No. 16.
- 46 H.O.F. 'Rhythmus und Rausch des Tages. "Kora Terry" – der Film einer Tänzerin', in *Filmwelt*. 6 December 1940. No. 49.
- 47 BAP R55/662. *Stand der Production 1943/44. Per.* 10 January 1944. Staffel I.
- 48 BAP R55/665. RFI to Goebbels. 26 June 1944. 34 films sent to Spain. 5 colour films: *Immensee*, *Kolberg*, *Große Freiheit Nr. 7*, *Opfergang* and *Die Frau meiner Träume*.
- 49 BAP R55/665. RFI to Goebbels. 27 June 1944. 20 films sent to Portugal. 4 colour films: *Immensee*, *Opfergang*, *Große Freiheit Nr. 7* and *Die Frau meiner Träume*.
- 50 BAP R55/665. RFI to Goebbels. 22 November 1944. 7 films to Finland: *Die Frau meiner Träume*, *Große Freiheit Nr. 7*, *Opfergang*, *Der Gebieterische Ruf*, *Philharmoniker* and *Der Herz muß Schweigen*.
- 51 Rökk, M., *op.cit.*, p. 136.
- 52 Borgelt, H., *Grethe Weiser: Herz mit Schnauze*. (Lothar Blanvalet, Berlin, 1971), p. 132. Official biography of Weiser.
- 53 *Ibid.*
- 54 BDC file Christine (sic. Kristina) Söderbaum RKK 2600 Box 0180 File 31. From Capt. Wallace to the Information Services Control Branch. Control Commission for Germany (BE) 23 November 1945. BICU/2023.
- 55 Borgelt, H., *op.cit.*, p. 132.
- 56 *Ibid.*
- 57 Rökk, M., *op.cit.*, p. 137.
- 58 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*. No. 186. BAFA 5773.
- 59 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*. No. 186. BAFA 5773.

The Negative Image of Women in the Feature Films of the Third Reich, 1939–1945

Introduction

The images presented in the previous chapters concentrate primarily on the desired image of womanhood promoted by National Socialist films from 1939 to 1945. In contrast to these images, the film industry offered a series of negative images intended to portray the ‘fallen woman’. The ‘fallen woman’ was accepted in films of the Weimar period, reflecting both the kitsch sexuality and the cinematic realism of the 1920s and early 1930s. Under National Socialism, film condemned this degenerate image. Curt Belling noted that Weimar cinema had, ‘innumerable films portraying women as *Ehebrecherinnen* and *Rassenschänderinnen* [adulteresses and racial violators]’.¹ Although actively opposed, this trend was continued in NS feature films, particularly in wartime, when National Socialism sought to appeal to an ever-increasing female audience, placing particular emphasis on the *Gesellschaftsfilme* (bourgeois social drama). This section intends to explore the images of racial violation and adultery, and how both gender and the progression of the War conditioned these portrayals.

This chapter explores the variety of negative female images forwarded by the RMVP. Female identity in this image was defined by her sexuality. She was presented as a racial polluter, a rebellious teenager, falling pregnant outside of wedlock, as an adulteress and as a mistress. In this section the image and fate of the racial polluter will be explored through the films *Jud Süß* (The Jew Süß, Veit Harlan, 1940) and *Die goldene Stadt* (The Golden City, Veit Harlan, 1942). The image of the male adulterer, as presented in Harlan’s *Die Reise nach Tilsit* (The Journey to Tilsit, Veit Harlan, 1939) will be compared with the image of the adulteress in Helmut Käutner’s *Romanze im Moll* (Romance in a Minor Key, Helmut Käutner, 1943) and Harlan’s *Opfergang* (The Sacrifice, Veit Harlan, 1944). A key element of the female protagonist, once again, was their willingness to sacrifice their happiness or their personal desires and even their lives for the good of the community and the Reich.

The Image of the *Rassenschänderin*

Jud Süß (The Jew Süß, Veit Harlan, 1940)

Introduction

‘Ten Jews in a Concentration Camp or under the ground are more to my liking than one with freedom.’²

Joseph Goebbels, 28 May 1942.

The above statement reflects the recurrent theme of race which permeated Nazi philosophy and policy, representing a radicalisation of nationalism and the transformation of German society into a community founded on the principles of biology, eugenics and hereditary laws. Nazism institutionalised purity of the blood. The legality afforded to racial prejudice under the Third Reich enabled unprecedented levels of persecution. The policy of *Entjudung* (Removal of the Jews) in the RMVP was initiated in 1933, with the introduction of the Aryan Paragraph, which forbade many Jews from participating in public sector employment. Particular emphasis was placed on the exclusion of Jews from cultural life. Hans Hinkel, in a speech for the Party Day in 1935, argued that during the initial years of the Reich, the work of the RKK was concerned with ‘the cleansing of Germany’s artistic and cultural life’.³ One year earlier, Curt Belling asserted that the film industry, in particular, was dominated by Jews. Belling claimed that, in 1930, Jews wrote 48 per cent of all feature films, composed 62 per cent of all film music and directed 43 per cent of feature films. He further noted that 70 per cent of all production companies were under Jewish control.⁴ Such estimates undoubtedly alarmed the incoming government, who immediately sought to remove Jews from cultural activities and positions of influence. With the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935, the RMVP declared that ‘Jews cannot become members of the RKK,’⁵ effectively preventing employment in the arts. *Entjudung* was a continuous policy in the Ministry, which was still being concluded in 1943, with an order that women who had previously been married to Jews could not be employed in the public sector.⁶

The experience of the *Entjudung* policy can be demonstrated in the case of Henny Porten. Porten, who was one of the great stars of German stage and screen from its formative years, married a Jew, Wilhelm von Kaufmann, on 24 July 1921. She refused to separate from Kaufmann after the Nazi *Machtergreifung* (Seizure of Power) in 1933, and consequently found a substantial reduction in the roles she was offered. One year later, in 1934, Porten found that she was at the centre of great controversy. An article included in Porten’s Gestapo file, entitled *Henny Porten’s Guilt*, provides an example of the public humiliation she was forced to endure. According to the article, Porten, ‘particularly mimics German women in

her films: German women of which she, in reality, is not one. Whoever shares a marriage bed with a Jew, has expelled herself from the German women's community.⁷ Such assertions in the popular press led to an unprecedented campaign in 1934, which intended to reinstate Porten to her former position within the film industry. A petition was sent to the RMVP in November 1934, asking the question, 'Why don't we see Henny Porten in films anymore?' According to her supporters, Porten was not a racial violator but was, alternatively, 'the embodiment of a true German woman'.⁸ One of the organisers of the 1934 petition, Luise Flaskamp, pursued the RMVP for an answer, writing first to the President of the RKK in 1934, and then in 1938, to Goebbels himself. Questioning the very essence of the Nazi movement, Flaskamp drew on the great number of foreign actresses employed in the film industry, noting that:

our German artists cannot get cinematic jobs and Ufa, the primary German film concern, employs foreigners again and again. In the film *Baracole*, a Hungarian was employed and even before the film had its premiere, she was already contracted to make a second film. Is this what 'National' and 'Socialism' means? I mean, first work and bread for our German artists and then, when there is an emergency, call upon such foreigners.⁹

Her concerns were expressed to the Reich Minister on 4 February 1938, asking him, '[is it] opinion or fact, that today, in Germany, a striking number of foreign actresses enjoy preference, pushing forward the question, "Have we then no German film actresses at all?"'¹⁰ Unbeknown to Luise Flaskamp, Goebbels was in the midst of concluding his affair with Lida Baarova, the actress Flaskamp targeted in many of her complaints. In July 1940, Flaskamp was being investigated by the Security Service, 'under suspicion of high treason'.¹¹ She wrote no further letters in support of Porten.

By 1937, however, Porten had attempted to bypass Goebbels' directive concerning her employment, appealing directly to Göring. It is evident that Porten maintained her contact with Göring throughout the period from 1935 to 1945. In a hand-written letter, dated December 1937, she informed him that, 'a contract with Tobis . . . would give me the opportunity to re-build my wrecked existence'. Thanking him for his continued support, Porten meekly wrote, 'I would like to speak with you but once more, but I will not ask anything of you.'¹² Porten began to star once again in leading roles in 1940, after the Minister of Propaganda verbally agreed to her re-employment.¹³ Porten, however, had to disappear when the Minister visited the set. In 1944, Göring helped Porten again, petitioning for a break in her career on health grounds,¹⁴ which represented Porten's final departure from film. In the period from 1933 to 1945, Porten made eight films, compared to the forty-six films she made from 1919 to 1933, attesting to her reduced role in film production of the Third Reich.

In 1935, Porten filmed under the direction of Veit Harlan in *Krach im Hinterhaus*. In October 1939, she was due to begin working with Harlan once again. Harlan's own project for that year was postponed and Tobis informed the RFA on 13 March 1940 that Porten was not able to 'make the planned Harlan film, because the director, Veit Harlan, is to produce *Jud Süß* for Terra Filmkunst, under orders from the RMVP'.¹⁵ The 1940 film was intended to bolster anti-Semitic policy and reiterate the continued racial education programme of the Reich. *Jud Süß* was produced as part of a trilogy, together with *Die Rothschilds* and *Der Ewige Jude* for the 1940/1 feature film programme.¹⁶ *Jud Süß* was arguably the most successful of the trilogy, combining a series of myths and preconceptions with an 'historical reality'.

Harlan's film was based on the novel by Leon Feuchtwanger.¹⁷ But Süß was an historical, and not a fictional, character. Born in Heidelberg in 1692, he made an ideal figure for the production of anti-Semitic propaganda. As illustrated in previous chapters, historical portrayals were popular in the Third Reich. They made for successful propaganda, capable of distortion in accordance with Nazi ideology and presented as 'fact'. *Jud Süß* offered an historical account of the Jewish character, which was presented as a global and timeless concern. The global and historical nature of the struggle against Jewry is highlighted by a report of the premiere of Harlan's film in *Film-Kurier* of 6 February 1941 in an article entitled *Von Amsterdam bis Budapest: Beifall für Jud Süß*. Assessing Dutch reaction to the release of the film, it noted the response of the *Deutsche Zeitung in den Niederlanden*, stating,

Jud Süß represents a piece of German and European history. In it lives our knowledge of our historical heritage. It is sure that all other European nations, who want to live under their own national laws must look into their own history and it is likewise sure that they will pay urgent attention to the existence of Judaism in their individual nations. The film takes an educational, practical world view. It refers to our current situation, but it is also timeless.¹⁸

This feeling of timelessness of the Jewish question is confirmed by a report by H.E. Fischer, in *Filmwelt*, which appeared on 4 October 1940, with reference to the Berlin premiere of the film. He noted that, at the Ufa-Palast, Reich Minister Goebbels personally congratulated the director and the actors 'for having shown in this epic film how relevant for us today are the shadows of the past'.¹⁹ *Jud Süß* used a distorted view of 'historical reality' in order to persuade the cinema audience that Reich policy towards the Jews had an historical precedent and that the Jews not only represented a danger to the Reich in contemporary times, but had done so for some time.

In the film, the Duke of Württemberg is having financial difficulties and sends

his aide, Von Reminchingen, to Frankfurt to enlist the help of the Jewish community. There, von Reminchingen encounters Süß Oppenheimer, who agrees to help only if he is granted free passage to Württemberg, which is banned under Württembergian law. Once in Württemberg, Süß ingratiates himself with the Duke, finally acquiring political and economic power in Württemberg, as expressed in his high taxation policies, which pay for the Duke's opulence. Süß is attracted to Dorothea Sturm, Faber's wife and the daughter of the local councillor. Frustrated by her rejection of him and angered by opposition from the town's people, Süß imprisons Faber and Sturm and rapes Dorothea. Ridden with guilt and shame, Dorothea takes her own life, throwing herself into a lake. This provokes a revolt among the people. Süß is sentenced to death for sexual intercourse with a Christian and hanged.

Harlan's film primarily deals with a number of pre-conceived myths regarding the 'inherent Jewish character.' Süß Oppenheimer is presented as an amalgamation of prejudice, borrowing from ancient and modern literature, psychology, and philosophy. The Jew appears as a usurer, a compliant servant and courtier, a financial and political manipulator, a physical chameleon, able to change his appearance to aid the process of social integration and, finally, as a sexual criminal, who preys on Christian women. It is this last image of the Jew, which is to be explored in detail here, as the female roles in Harlan's film revolves around the sexuality of Süß.

The first scenes, in which Dorothea Sturm, the main female protagonist, played by Kristina Söderbaum,²⁰ appears with Süß, emphasise both the Jew's ability to change appearance and the female's incapability of recognising this. In reporting the release of *Jud Süß*, Dr Günther Seuern, noted in *Filmwelt*, on 2 February 1940, that, 'The Jew Süß . . . is the type of assimilation Jew, who . . . disguises himself and seeks to preferably take on the life experience and traditions of his Aryan contemporary'.²¹ The assimilation scenes are heralded by the proclamation by Süß of his intentions to the Duke's envoy, von Reminchingen:

- Von Reminchingen: So, if I can manage it, and I send you a pass, would it not be obvious to everyone what has happened? [Points to Süß's beard]
- Süß: Only the Peaus and the Caftan denote a Jew. Don't worry your head, Excellency. I'll take care of my appearance and you take care of the pass!
- Levy: You will cut your beard, you want to cut your Peaus and you will no longer wear your Caftan? Have you told the Rabbi?
- Süß: You charmer! I'll open the door for you all!

It is Süß's intention to change his appearance in order to be accepted by the people of Stuttgart and infiltrate the court and the community. Harlan stated that it was his aim to stress the motif of disguise in the 1940 production, confirming in an interview to *Der Film* on 20 January 1940 that, 'in this film, I show primordial Judaism, as it was then and as it has remained until today, substantially unchanged. In contrast to international Judaism, there is only the Jew Süß, the elegant court financial advisor, the treacherous schemer; in short, the disguised Jew.'²² It is this metamorphosis which, in the film, confuses all but the most astute Aryans. Dorothea does not recognise Süß to be a Jew until his race is pointed out to her by Faber, her fiancé. She meets Süß for the first time on the road to Stuttgart. His carriage crashes and she takes him into the town aboard hers. They discuss travel, and Süß informs Dorothea that he has travelled all over Europe, Rome, Lisbon, Paris, Vienna, Madrid and London, emphasising the international character of the Jewry:

Dorothea: But where is your home?

Süß: My home? Everywhere!

Dorothea: Everywhere? Haven't you got a home?

Süß: Indeed . . . the world!

[Dorothea drives Süß to her father's house, and it is here that Faber recognises Süß to be a Jew]

Faber: That is a Jew. Herr Oppenheimer from Frankfurt! [Dorothea doubts Faber's assumption]

Faber: I am not mistaken. That is a Jew! [He approaches Süß] Sir, I would recommend to you that you do not miss the next post!

Süß: Why? I am not in a hurry. I still have some business to do in Stuttgart. On the contrary, I was going to ask whether you could recommend a good guest house to me.

Faber: We do not have Hostels for Jews in Stuttgart!

Süß: My compliments on your knowledge of human nature, Sir.

The possession of this '*Menschenkenntnis*' on the part of Faber serves to expose the Jew to the rest of the community. Dorothea fails to recognise Süß to be a Jew, partially exposing her innocence, partially demonstrating her ignorance; an ignorance which later is to spell her downfall.

The character of Dorothea mainly revolves around the machinations of Süß. However, there are some scenes in which Dorothea appears without Süß, which were included by Harlan in order to build the picture of Dorothea as the perfect Aryan girl, making her fall at the hands of Süß all the more ominous. This *Idealtypus*, as illustrated in the previous chapters, was to adhere to the Nazi feminine virtues of motherhood, duty to husband and family and innocence, although it is this innocence, as illustrated in her lack of racial knowledge, which paradoxically determines her fate.

**TO VIEW THIS FIGURE PLEASE REFER
TO THE PRINTED EDITION**

Figure 16. The bedroom scene with Dorothea and Faber²³

The first time Dorothea appears in the film, she is preparing the midday meal for Faber and her father. Dorothea is portrayed as dutiful, loyal and domesticated. The character of Dorothea is family based, and she promised to make a loyal wife to Faber, as illustrated in the scene on Faber and Dorothea's wedding night²³:

- Dorothea: Come in here! Are you nervous? You'll sleep in my bed tonight and I'll sleep downstairs in the living room. So come here and take a corner of this! I'm not managing very well. Why should father worry? We are man and wife after all!
- Faber: But he must be given time to get used to it.
- Dorothea: Are you grumbling already? I have got used to it. I have longed for this day for such a long time, Faber!
- Faber: But I see this wedding day quite differently at the moment.
- Dorothea: I do, too. I believe that father is quite sorrowful.
- Faber: You mean because of the Jew?
- Dorothea: Mainly because of the urgent nature of everything that has occurred. As long as I can remember, I have not eaten without my father at the table. And only today, on our wedding day, he is not here. But I think that we can still be happy. You are now my husband. You will protect me. You are my joy.

During this conversation, Dorothea and Faber are interrupted by the news that Sturm has been imprisoned by Süß. The couple, therefore, never get to consummate their marriage, for Faber immediately leaves to enquire after Sturm. Hence, when Süß later rapes Dorothea, he defiles an innocent and virginal, and yet, married woman. Perhaps more importantly though from an ideological perspective, he rapes an Aryan, committing blood sin, for which he eventually loses his life.

The sexual criminality of the Jew is emphasised in the portrayal of Süß, manifesting itself in a number of forms: firstly as a pimp for the Duke, securing mistresses for him and preying on the young for this purpose; secondly, in the pursuit of Dorothea; and, finally, as the rapist and racial polluter. This was in accordance with Nazi racial ideology and was a popular theme in Julius Streicher's infamous publication, *Der Stürmer*. Hitler specifically linked Judaism to sexual behaviour and corruption. In *Mein Kampf*, he noted that 'the relation of the Jews to prostitution and even more to the white slave traffic could be studied in Vienna . . . When, for the first time, I recognised the Jew as the cold hearted, shameless and calculating director of this revolting vice traffic in the scum of the city, a cold shudder ran down my back.'²⁴ The image of Süß in Harlan's film conforms to the National Socialist perception of Jewish involvement in the procurement of sex. At the masked ball, dancers entertain the Duke, who informs Süß that he has sent his wife to a retreat at Ludwigsburg, inferring that he is left alone to enjoy the ball. Süß presents the young dancers to the Duke as a means of procuring him some sexual entertainment for the evening:

Süß: Would you care to note the order of the dancers? The old maids at the back and the fresh youth at the front . . . I thought that, instead of the boring old thistles of the court, you could have the spring flowers of the field for once. And they are all for you alone, your highness!

Süß offers the Duke innocent youth, selected by Süß himself, portraying him as the sexual agent for the Duke, using youth as his prey. This scene effectively prepares the audience for his own pursuit of the young Aryan, Dorothea, which occurs that evening at the same masked ball. Süß continues his acquaintance with Dorothea, despite Faber's warnings, although in this encounter, their conversation ends with Dorothea quite petrified of the Jew²⁵:

Dorothea: I am not dancing, Herr Finanzenrat.

Süß: Oh? Are you not going to follow your own Duke in the dance?

Dorothea: The Duke? [They dance]

Süß: You had not expected to see me in these surroundings so soon?

Dorothea: I had not desired to, no.

**TO VIEW THIS FIGURE PLEASE REFER
TO THE PRINTED EDITION**

Figure 17. Süß pursues Dorothea at the ball²⁵

- Süß: Why is your beautiful mouth so serious? I had really hoped that I would see it laugh again, as it did in the carriage.
- Dorothea: I thought you wanted to dance?
- Süß: Hot lips, cold heart – is that not what they say? Can your mouth say what is in your heart?
- Dorothea: Please leave me.
- Süß: Does the Mademoiselle want to continue with the dance?
- Dorothea: No, not anymore. [She tries to leave]
- Süß: Where are you going?
- Dorothea: I am going to find my father. [She finds Faber and runs into his arms]
- Süß: Will the Mademoiselle do me the honour of taking this dance with me?
- Faber: She will not!
- Sturm: My child, go home!
- Süß: You are impertinent, Sir, to begrudge the young lady her entertainment.
- Sturm: Will you please excuse me! [He follows his daughter out]

Filming Women in the Third Reich

The pursuit of Dorothea builds from their first encounter in the carriage, to the masked ball, and finally to her rape. In her final desperate hours, Dorothea attempts to free Faber and her father, who have been captured and imprisoned by Süß. Naively, Dorothea visits Süß, in order to negotiate their release:

Dorothea: I beseech you, Your Excellency, help me! I have a petition here. Everyone has signed it. Here – here is the petition.

Süß: What should the Duke do with this petition? [He takes the petition] He would tear it up, and so would I. He would have the traitors shot.

Dorothea: Have mercy! Have you no heart?

Süß: I have a heart. I am always merciful, Mademoiselle, oh, excuse me, Madame [He looks at her marriage finger] What a nice ring! From your husband? In this case, it will be very difficult to help you. [Dorothea offers the ring to Süß, believing that he wants financial incentives]

Dorothea: Would you like my ring? It is a genuine stone!

Süß: [Laughing] Such a small ring for such a small hand! Do you want to see a real ring? Come, come with me! [Süß shows a much larger ring to Dorothea] Do you want to examine it? Go on, examine it! Do you still think that you can buy me with such a small ring? Me? Do you want to have this ring? [Süß puts the ring on Dorothea's hand. She pulls away from him. He tries to embrace her. She screams and pushes him to the floor. He falls, crashing through the table.] You want to free your father and your husband, don't you? You must know how to manipulate situations skilfully! When a bird catcher frees a bird from its cage, he must have another to replace it. You understand that don't you? [He places a handkerchief in the window. This is a sign for the torture of Faber to begin. Faber screams in pain.] You know that voice, don't you?

Dorothea: God in heaven!

Süß: Go on, take the handkerchief away? [She takes it. The screams stop.] Can you hear anything? [Silence] That's what it means. [Dorothea does not understand and so Süß places the handkerchief back on the window sill. The screams begin again.] So take it away, my child! [She takes it, crying for Faber] Give me my hankie back!

Dorothea: [Clutching it to her] No!

Süß: No? Good, you can keep it but . . . [Dorothea is against the wall, with her eyes closed, murmuring 'Our Father who art in Heaven'] What? You're praying? Praying to your God. The Christians aren't the only ones with a God though. We Jews have a God too. The

The Negative Image of Women

God of revenge. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth . . . Do you want the traitors to avoid being shot? I can arrange this. [Dorothea is continually protesting 'Leave me alone'] Don't be embarrassed. You can have your insurance clerk back afterwards. [Süß pushes Dorothea onto the bed, which is located under the Star of David. She screams.]

This scene concludes with the pursuit of the young, innocent, virginal Aryan woman, and completes the picture of the Jew as the sexual creature, criminal and blood defiler. The sexual excesses of the legendary Süß Oppenheimer himself were discussed in Curt Elwenspoek's biography, which was primarily based on myths surrounding Süß. Elwenspoek believed that women found Süß attractive, noting that:

intercourse with a Jew had been a deadly sin, punishable with burning at the stake; in any case, consciousness of this had not disappeared. And besides the lure of forbidden fruit was to be reckoned the novelty of another race, some mysteriously fascinating idea of some sort of unsuspected erotic surprise.²⁶

He concludes that 'Süß was a fundamentally sensual and temperamental being.'²⁷ Such an overt declaration of sexuality could not have escaped Harlan in his preparation for the film. But Harlan's Süß, portrayed by Ferdinand Marian, is stripped of his attractive nature, making him repellent to 'good' Aryan women. The only way that the cinematic Süß is able to obtain such women is through criminal acts, such as harassment, manipulation, bribery, blackmail, abuse and, eventually, rape. Harlan later claimed that such a depiction was as a direct result of Goebbels' anti-Semitic beliefs. Harlan stated that 'it was this version of anti-Semitism which Goebbels wanted to express on the screen; opposition not against Judaism en masse, but against the "intrinsic criminal element of Jewry."'²⁸ In his post-war memoirs, Harlan sought to justify this portrayal of Süß, stating that,

the big inexcusable mistake, that the Jew Süß makes in the film, is to take by force the woman he likes and wants to marry, but who has refused him solely because he is a Jew. That is his only fault. One cannot compare him at all with the historical Süß, who committed innumerable sexual crimes. It must be emphasised that in the film, Süß Oppenheimer asks Dorothea's father for her hand in marriage. In place of a response, her father opens the window, so that the air in the room did not smell of the Jew. This scene allows us to understand why later Süß Oppenheimer exacts his revenge so brutally, as a result of this affront, which he had to suffer. His love is born of hate, and this hate is a response to anti-Semitism.²⁹

If this was Harlan's true intention, it would generate a certain amount of sympathy for the character. It was, however, quite clear to the actors in the film that the hateful nature of Süß was to be emphasised. Kristina Söderbaum, who played Dorothea, remembered Marian's opposition to playing the role, which he voiced to Goebbels. She recalls that Marian argued:

'Herr Minister, I usually play bon-vivants and lovers. However, this Jew Süß is a truly unpleasant character. I don't want my fans to see me like this . . .' Goebbels went over to Marian and shoved him against the table, and quietly said, full of irony, 'Put it like this. Your public would not like to see you in this role? Who casts you in your roles? Your fans or me?' Marian shook his head. What reply could he offer? The Reich Minister continued, 'I have just recently seen you as Iago in a German theatre. You were excellent. Was he a nice Bon-vivant?' 'But that was Shakespeare, Herr Minister!' 'And I am Joseph Goebbels,' he screamed in Marian's face.³⁰

Outside of casting difficulties, Harlan stated that Goebbels made modifications to the film. In an unpublished interview, housed in the Imperial War Museum, Söderbaum recalled that:

Goebbels had seen the film and he was furious because he said that it was not an anti-Semitic film. They put in synchronisation. When [Goebbels] got the film and saw the film, he was very, very angry, and he was crying out, 'That is not the sort of propaganda film I wish to do'. And we had to change it and we did, without my husband . . . They gave Marian other words to say in special places and they changed a lot of it.³¹

Harlan's account confirms these changes:

[Goebbels accused me] of being, 'incapable of thinking in political terms'. [He claimed that] I had made a film totally different to the one he had ordered to be made. Goebbels established then a plan of how to modify the film. The scenes where the 'Romeo Marian, was in the process of wooing' Kristina Söderbaum, who returned his cooing with a smile . . . had to disappear. He created a number of new scenes . . . adding a new ending . . . Goebbels contented himself, finally, with cutting the scenes in which the Jew was depicted, in his opinion, as being too pleasant. Amongst them was a scene with Kristina and Marian where Dorothea Sturm shows sympathy for Süß Oppenheimer, because she has been promised to another man. 'This lack of good character' on the part of Dorothea made him particularly angry. The Minister, with the help of his collaborators, began to alter the script and, through post-filming synchronisation, gave the script a more anti-Semitic feel.³²

Goebbels' alteration concentrated on the relationship between the female character, Dorothea, and Süß. Goebbels claimed that Harlan had 'transformed Süß, the monster, into Romeo'.³³ Even *Filmwelt* of April 1940 noted this aspect of the historical Süß's character, stating that 'he was a devil, but a devil like Don Juan.'³⁴

The Negative Image of Women

This was an unacceptable image for the racial state and distinctions had to be made between the historical Süß Oppenheimer and the Jew Süß to be portrayed in the Ministry's film. The final cinematic product emerged, therefore, with Süß as the sexual criminal and villain, an image which particularly targeted women. A report by the special squad III/1 of the Strasbourg security police stated that:

the events on the screen are so realistic that audiences are constantly provoked to comment and shouting; and indication that the Party's educational work on the Jewish question is taking effect. 'Dirty pig Jew!', 'You Jewish swine!', and 'Filthy Jew boy', are comments often heard, particularly from women.³⁵

However, Söderbaum notes that the image the RMVP desired was not effecting women in the way Goebbels had hoped. When she was asked whether people thought that the image of Marian was disgusting, she replied, 'No, the people? No . . . because Marian, he was so marvellous and he was such a lovely man, that all the women said, "Oh why was she so sad of this love story with Marian? We should all like to have our love story with him!"'³⁶

Whether German women admired Süß or not, the intention of the RMVP was unequivocal. The rape scene in *Jud Süß* contained a message to Aryan women living in Hitler's Reich. It was believed that the spirit of the Jew was in his sperm, and that this spirit was absorbed by the woman through sexual intercourse. The pseudo-medical newspaper, *The People's Health through Blood and Soil*, expressed such concerns:

The sperm in cohabitation is partially or completely absorbed by the female and thus enters her blood stream. One single cohabitation of a Jew with an Aryan woman is sufficient to poison her blood forever. Together with the alien albumen, she has absorbed the alien soul. Never again will she be able to bear purely Aryan children, even when married to an Aryan. They will all be bastards with a dual soul and a body of a mixed breed.³⁷

This ideological concept was emphasised by the Laws for the Protection of German Blood and Honour, the so-called Nuremberg Laws, of September 1935. The laws clearly specified that not only was marriage between Jews and Aryans forbidden, but also that sexual relations between the races were outlawed, institutionalising and legalising anti-Semitic ideology. According to Nazi eugenicists, the mixing of racial blood was resulting in the degeneration of the Aryan race, producing mixed breed children, who were inheriting the poor traits of their inferior parentage. Hitler was a firm believer in biological hereditary laws, stating that 'blood sin and the desecration of the race are the original sin in this world and the end of a humanity which surrenders to it'.³⁸

Racial propaganda was particularly directed at women, as, ultimately, women

had the responsibility for producing acceptable offspring. Else Frobenius, a Nazi commentator, proclaimed that 'women are at the heart of the nation. Her blood is our blood. The mother is the bearer of the race.'³⁹ Clifford Kirkpatrick, a contemporary observer, noted the predominance of eugenics in the status of German women:

Three voices whisper in the ears of German women. (1) The Voice of Race Mysticism . . . to bear the sons of the Nordic . . . Siegfried type. (2) The Gospel of Folk Organism. This folk organism contains as cells those individuals who are similar in blood and who are bound together by a tradition and culture peculiarly congenial to the inner potentialities of the German race. And (3) Scientific Eugenics.⁴⁰

The combination of these factors and the legislation of such ideological principles, necessary for the preservation of the race, placed women at the core of racial policy. Women were to be made particularly aware of the temptations offered by other races. The *NS Frauenschaft* undertook the racial education of women, noting that 'the seriousness of the problem must be stressed. The tenacity of the Jews for life, their international connections and their art of concealment and lies, must be brought in the most impressive way to the minds of women.'⁴¹

Given that racial propaganda was to be directed at women, Harlan's 1940 production was an integral part of this campaign. Harlan's film forwarded such National Socialist theories through 'historical' parallel, using the characters of Süß and Dorothea as vehicles. Dorothea was used by the RMVP to convey the message to Aryan women, enhancing existing laws and forwarding the campaign for the purification of the *Volk*. The *Rassenschänderin* was to be highlighted as an undesirable role model for young women in the 'New Order'. The fate of those who refused to listen to the message was made quite clear. Julius Streicher's anti-Semitic newspaper, *Der Stürmer*, stressed in January 1938 that 'the supreme aim and the highest task of the state is to conserve the people, blood and race. But if this is the supreme task, crime against the law must be punished with the supreme penalty.'⁴² Such a penalty was paid by Dorothea and Süß in the 1940 Harlan production. Süß, guilty of criminal rape, was also guilty of race pollution, which, we are told in the film, was against ancient Württembergian laws, similar in terminology to the 1935 Nuremberg laws. *Filmwelt* criticised Süß in particular for

his crime against the holy laws of race . . . The law reads, 'whoever conducts physical relations should be punished with the death penalty'. For centuries, [the law was] a barrier for the protection of Aryans against the disgraceful intrusion of the Jews . . . [These laws] are experiencing their brilliant re-incarnation in the Nuremberg Laws.⁴³

It is unlikely that audiences would have failed to notice the parallel of Württemberg of 1738 and Germany of 1940.

According to the principles outlined above, Dorothea was now unable to perform her task as a German mother. Breeding with Faber to produce Aryan children was now impossible, if ideology dictates that woman, once poisoned, is poisoned forever and cannot be redeemed. It is, therefore, better if Faber is free to breed with another, more suitable woman. Thus, Dorothea has no role within the society of Stuttgart, just as her modern-day counterpart would be afforded no place within the German Reich. The actual rape of Dorothea is minimised and emphasis is placed on the biological factors pertaining to her defilement. That Süß forced Dorothea into sexual relations highlights the Jew as a criminal, yet his greatest crime, according to the 1940 production, was not the rape itself, but blood pollution. Both characters, through the defilement of Dorothea, have now decided their fate. According to Nazi ideology, Süß and Dorothea, assuming the roles of racial polluter and racially polluted, must be eliminated from the community, allowing room for the *Volk* to recover and progress.

The Death of Dorothea. Both Dorothea and Süß meet symbolic ends. Kristina Söderbaum (Dorothea) met so many symbolic deaths in films made between 1935 and 1945, that she was named *Reichswasserleiche* – the Reich floating corpse.⁴⁴ It was not Söderbaum's initial intention to play the tragic figures of many of her films. She often portrayed the Aryan farming or home-loving girl. In her application to be included in the Autumn 1935 batch of screen tests, Söderbaum confessed that she longed to play 'modern young people of the 20th Century, who stand with both feet on the ground'.⁴⁵ Rather Söderbaum found herself very much stuck in historically based films, as a simple girl, either heralded as the Aryan and loyal heroine or the naïve country bumpkin, led astray by the vices of other races, with her characters being the victims of archaic and rustic punishments. Söderbaum recalls the fate of her character in the 1940 film, noting that '[Süß] was a mean lady-killer, who raped a Christian woman, causing her to drown herself'.⁴⁶ Dorothea would not have been able to live with the shame and disgrace that sexual relations with a Jew could have afforded in the eyes of the *Volk*. Her death in the film prompts the appropriate reaction from the town populace: mass revolt against the Jew, the Duke and their combined vices.

The nature of Dorothea's death, suicide by drowning in the lake, is symbolic and a further example of the use of ancient and traditional symbols in *Jud Süß*. Death at the hands of nature, and particularly water, was seen as a sign of exorcism, in this case, the exorcism of Süß from the soul of Dorothea. In death, Dorothea has cleansed her body and soul before departing the earth. In the final scenes of the film, she is portrayed as angelic. She is forgiven, sacrificing her own life for the benefit of the community and her family name. On 2 February 1940, *Filmwelt* noted that the role of Dorothea was 'the only big female role of the film, the tragic fate of a girl who . . . takes her own life in pain and disgrace'.⁴⁷ A poem in

circulation in 1738 stressed traditional motifs regarding water, sexual vice, and Jews: 'And has that scoundrel, rascal Süß, passed down his lewd Hebraic juice on innocent posterity. Should one who would a Christian be, not cast such filth upon the ground since she is worthy to be drowned.'⁴⁸ Drowning and submersion appeared in other films of the Reich as the most suitable method for eliminating the 'fallen woman'. This aspect also featured in *Die goldene Stadt* (1942) and *Dorf im Roten Sturm* (1942).

In the film, the death of Süß is also symbolic of the nature of his crime. He is hanged on a charge of blood pollution. The film notes, 'If a Jew mixes with a Christian, he should be brought to the gallows and hanged. This will be his punishment.' In reality, Süß's death warrant, issued on 25 January 1738, stated that Süß was to be hanged for 'abominable misdeeds done against the Sovereign of the land'.⁴⁹ The gallows constructed for Süß were of special significance. Again, poems in circulation in 1738 highlight the symbolic nature of his death. The board immediately under the gallows read: 'Look in this cage, you may see a villain, Süß the Jew is he.'⁵⁰ Further contemporary poetry emphasises one reason why such a contraption was used: 'Cuckoo, 'tis the end of the day, henceforth no strange egg you'll lay in other birdies nests.'⁵¹ Süß was hanged in this bird cage in Harlan's film as he is the bird-catcher referred to in the rape scene. According to Elwenspoek, this contraption alluded to Oppenheimer's 'carnal sins, by hanging him, the fowler or bird-snarer, on the gallows in a bird cage'.⁵² Harlan develops this idea in the rape scene, with Süß identifying himself as the 'bird-snarer', stating, 'you want me to set your father and your husband free don't you? You must understand that when a bird catcher sets a bird free from its cage, he must have another to replace it.' The bird was to be Dorothea, and Süß is hanged for having sexual intercourse with her, condemned to hang in his own bird cage, snared by the people of Stuttgart. In sentencing Süß, the last line was intended as a message to German society; 'Let this be a lesson to everyone.' This was in effect the purpose of Harlan's *Jud Süß*.

Public Reaction. With information regarding public reaction to film in the Reich both scarce and in some instances unreliable, it is virtually impossible to decipher a purely female reaction to the film. The only indication of female reaction is through the interview with Kristina Söderbaum, in which she claims that female admiration of Ferdinand Marian, the actor who played Süß in the 1940 production, remained unchanged after his portrait of this character. It is possible to partially reconstruct a wider reaction from the general public from the SD report, dated 28 November 1940. The public singled out the rape scene as being the most effective, placing the sexual relationship between the Jew and the Aryan at the centre of Harlan's film:

According to unanimous reports from all parts of the Reich, the film *Jud Süß* continues to receive an extraordinarily favourable response. The verdict on a film has rarely been as unanimous as it has been in the case of *Jud Süß*. Among the scenes especially singled out by the public – apart from the rape scene – is the entry of the Jews and all their bags and luggage into Stuttgart. In fact, this scene has repeatedly incited demonstrations against the Jewry in the course of the film. For example, in Berlin, people shouted, ‘Ban the Jews from the Kurfürstendamm! Get rid of the last Jews from Germany!’⁵³

The rape scene provoked a feeling in the audience of uncleanness and pure hatred. The SD report for the film *Der Ewige Jude*, released just one year later, highlighted the effect of Harlan’s film on the audience: ‘Statements like, “We’ve seen *Jud Süß* and we’ve had enough of Jewish filth” can often be heard . . . People have frequently claimed that *Jud Süß* had shown a much more convincing picture of the Jewry.’⁵⁴

It is important to briefly explore how effective the portrait offered in *Jud Süß* actually was to the general public and decipher who was the target audience for the film’s propagandistic message. The SD report of Harlan’s film noted that ‘the question of whether it would be a good thing for children to see the film is almost always answered in the negative by parents and teachers, due to the film’s immensely powerful psychological effects.’⁵⁵ Sander’s 1944 youth survey documents children’s reaction to the film, which was favourable, with ninety-two questionnaires stating that they enjoyed the film, compared to thirteen who did not. Responses as to why such decisions had been taken are quite enlightening. *Jud Süß* was an historic film, set in the eighteenth century, which was appealing to young cinema-goers. Only thirteen questionnaires stated that the film’s main merit was its anti-Semitism. Within these thirteen, two stated that ‘the Jews are treacherous’, and three responded that ‘the Jews are deceitful’. Although superficial, these figures indicate that Harlan’s film, whilst receiving a favourable appraisal, did not significantly effect youth anti-Semitism, with only thirteen of ninety-two responses praising the film’s anti-Semitic stance. Youth was conditioned outside of the cinema and Harlan’s film, at most, bolstered previous convictions. Given the extreme, and perhaps exaggerated, reaction indicated in the SD reports quoted above, it is possible that the message of the film was aimed at the adult population, and, perhaps, even at the female population, regarding sexual relations and the race issue. It is certain that the RMVP thought that the purpose and message of the 1940 film was clear. In April 1940, the RPA in Berlin sent a memorandum to the German Press, reminding them that ‘the next time a film is released with reference to the Jews, such as the film *Jud Süß*, it should not be described as an anti-Semitic film. Such a characterisation is incorrect as such films will, through the effect on the public, automatically fulfil their purpose.’⁵⁶ Five months later, in October 1940, a letter from RR. Dr Richter to Goebbels noted that *Jud Süß*, was ‘an extraordinary success.’⁵⁷

Certainly this reaction and the propagandistic value of the film led the authorities to release *Jud Süß* in occupied Europe. The RMVP believed that the success of *Jud Süß* abroad was crucial to the creation of anti-Semitism on an European scale, attempting to rally the support of the Occupied Territories to Reich racial policy. The film was released in Hungary, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, Spain, Italy, and in the Eastern Occupied Territories, although not in Finland, where the film was banned by the Finnish film censor.⁵⁸ The weight of evidence suggests that the political message of the film was recognised by the authorities and, to some extent, by the public, both within the Reich and within the Occupied Territories. The central message of Harlan's film was to highlight the perils of racial pollution and the effect of Judaism on the community. The RMVP ensured that their anti-Semitic message reached women and youth, in particular, who, according to Nazi ideologists, were the key to preserving the purity of Germanic blood.

Harlan was rewarded for the production of such an ideologically important piece. He was commended on his effort for this film, along with his other productions, at the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations of Ufa, when he was awarded the title of Professor. His award certificate contained the following dedication:

Harlan has become . . . one of the most significant German film directors . . . He has made ceaseless endeavours to further the artistic development of German film (in particular, artistic fashioning of colour film). Also his political propaganda in the call of war duty for the German people has considerable meaning. Through his films *Jud Süß* and *Der große König* the national resistance of the broad masses of the German people has been strengthened.⁵⁹

As the dedication noted, the film continued to play a part in the wartime campaign, even in the final years of war. The *Volksturm* demanded in November 1944 that *Jud Süß* be re-released in a programme of national films, intended to strengthen the home front.⁶⁰

The film, initially thought to be part of a limited 1940 trilogy of anti-Semitic films, along with *Die Rothschilds* and *Der Ewige Jude*, was part of a wider campaign. Towards the end of the War, Goebbels commissioned Harlan to begin production of *Der Kaufmann von Venedig*, a National Socialist version of Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, using the same production team as *Jud Süß*.⁶¹ Kristina Söderbaum was to play alongside Werner Krauss, who was to play Shylock, after having successfully played the same role in Vienna.⁶² Ufa records show that script-work of this production had begun in December 1944.⁶³ In the fragments of this lost script, it is possible to see that Harlan's work bore little relation to Shakespeare's original, or to his previous anti-Semitic production. In a note to the reader of the script, however, Harlan stated, 'the character of the Jew was not created in our contemporary propaganda, but moreover from the timeless validity from the heart and mind of one of the greatest spirits of humanity'.⁶⁴

Certainly the importance of this film was not lost on the Allies. Immediately after the War, the film was banned. Harlan was tried in Hamburg for crimes against humanity. The trial, which began on 15 July 1948, claimed that Harlan's work, in particular *Jud Süß*, idealised Nazi philosophy and promoted anti-Semitic tendencies within German society. The prosecution claimed that Harlan had fully understood the meaning of the 1940 film and that he had aided the development of the Holocaust. Extracts from the minutes of the trial stress their concerns with Harlan's work:

The manufacture of the films with anti-Semitic tendencies in the years 1939–1940 had a particular meaning as a part of the National Socialist programme . . . Anti-Semitic films, in particular *Jud Süß*, ordered by Goebbels, were screened just before the implementation of the final phase of the Nazi anti-Jewish programme. These films made the public psyche ripe for what became the extermination of the Jews at the hands of National Socialism . . . The film in its entirety put itself at the service of National Socialist propaganda and attempted to 're-educate' the people in the questions of Judaism.⁶⁵

Due to the lack of evidence actually linking these claims to the film, Harlan was acquitted. Whether Harlan actually believed in the propagandistic message he conveyed is difficult to ascertain. Therese Müller, nanny to Harlan's children, claimed in 1993 that 'he was really very persuaded by politics and by the entire regime'.⁶⁶ Evidence also suggests that Harlan used the propagandistic value and popular appeal of his film to raise his salary in 1940. After the success of *Jud Süß*, Harlan demanded an extra RM 10,000 for further productions. Dr Kimmich, desk officer in Franz Seldte's ministry, agreed to this but only if 'there were to be similar performances, as were portrayed in *Jud Süß*'.⁶⁷ This was perhaps incentive enough for Harlan to continue the production of propagandistic films such as the next film to be dealt with here, *Die goldene Stadt*, directed by Harlan two years later, in 1942. Coincidentally, the role of the main female protagonist in this film, Anna, mirrored the life and fate of Dorothea in Harlan's previous racial production.

Die goldene Stadt (The Golden City, Veit Harlan, 1942)

Introduction. In his most publicised work on the German cinema, *From Caligari to Hitler. A Psychological Study of the German Cinema*, Siegfried Kracauer noted that one of the authors of *Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1920), Hans Janowitz, was raised in Prague. Kracauer described the effect Janowitz's birthplace had on the final production, commenting that Prague was a town where 'reality fuses with dreams and dreams turn into visions of horror'.⁶⁸ This is the essence of Harlan's 1942 production, *Die goldene Stadt*. The film's central aim was to contrast images of city and rural life, leading to the sanctification of a rustic existence and the condemnation of cosmopolitanism. Harlan used strong

characterisation to represent each facet of the alternate lifestyles, and provided a sub-plot with a racial message similar to the one he had offered two years earlier in *Jud Süß*. The 'negative' image of the main female protagonist also bore a resemblance to Dorothea in this earlier film. This section explores the role of Anuschka, the main female character in *Die goldene Stadt*, and demonstrates the connections between the depictions of the female racial polluter in the films of the Third Reich, using Harlan's 1942 film as an example.

Die goldene Stadt was part of a campaign intended to prevent an exodus from the land. The RMVP regarded this exodus as 'one of the greatest dangers to our national life'.⁶⁹ In 1942, the Ministry released a series of *Landausfluchtfilme* (films dealing with the exodus from farming and the countryside) in order to compliment the campaign. Such films led comparisons to be drawn between city and rural life. As in Harlan's 1942 production, the city was often portrayed as the antithesis of National Socialist *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil) ideology. Goebbels voiced his concerns regarding this tendency and noted that the genre led to 'a false portrayal of the town',⁷⁰ which could cause resentment and an urban distancing from the Nazi movement. Nevertheless, *Landausfluchtfilme* were to be promoted, according to the RMVP, 'even if this would result in financial loss',⁷¹ such was the urgency of the issue.

One of the key elements of these *Landausfluchtfilme* was the propagation of National Socialist *Blut und Boden* ideology. *Blut und Boden* literally denoted the combination of blood and soil, a concept steeped in mythological and *völkisch* terminology. It drew its inspiration from the farming community, seen to be the bastion of familial life, integrating the needs of the individual farmer with the notion of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The *Erbhofgesetz* (Reich Entailed Farming Law) established that properties up to 309 acres could not be mortgaged or sold. The hereditary farms were to be passed down to male offspring, keeping the agricultural tradition passing from one generation to the next. The official definition of *Blut und Boden* was provided in the *Taschenwörterbuch des Neuen Staates*, published in 1933, and intended to guide Germans through the terminology accompanying the new regime. Venerating the farming community, it states that:

The vigour of the German people lies on the land and National Socialism demands a healthy farming community. It is the constant source of strength which aids and rejuvenates the nation . . . The German farmer is the genuine creator of the people's culture; the nation needs the healthy and eternal generations which spring from his family. To further the farming community is the first task of the National Socialist Reich.⁷²

The propagation of these traditions, ancient customs and community ideals detracted from the recent German past, eradicating the Weimar period; an era which was the embodiment of cosmopolitanism, decadence and internationalism. Such a

culture rejected German tradition and drew youth from the land into the city. Nazism, in its denunciation of Weimar culture, retreated into the past, attempting to create a mythological smoke screen for the modernisation of the Reich. In accordance with the push for *Lebensraum* (Living Space), continually increasing war aims and the desire for autarky, it was increasingly important to eradicate Weimar notions of city life and force a return to 'traditional' livelihoods.

Thus, ruralism became a focus for German propaganda, through art and culture, in the Nazi era. In 1935, the NSDAP produced a commemorative book, entitled *Ein deutscher Bauer* (A German Farmer), extolling the virtues of the peasant community. The book contained a prayer for the Harvest Festival. The nature of the community and the National Socialist spirit was instilled in the prayer, which sought to link party ideology with the farming community:

We are all united through blood and soil. We all plough the same land. We all eat the same bread. We all have the same needs. We all struggle against the same difficulties. For our fields, for our farms and for our homes. One hatred. One love. One prayer. One faith, with which to survive the storm. One will, which brings all our work to life. One heart, in which need and sacrifice are born. We are one and no longer 'I'. One life. One death. For you, Germany.⁷³

The prayer placed particular emphasis on the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.⁷⁴ Hitler continued this theme, when introducing the 1935 commemorative book, writing:

Never forget that the holiest law in this world is the law of the earth, the earth that man himself toils upon, and the holiest sacrifice of the blood, that man will shed for this land. As long as the *Volk* can draw upon a strong farming tradition, it will always, always draw new strength and hope from it. Through all times, small and medium sized farmers, hearty through and through, have been the best guard against social disease. The Reich will always be protected when, over hundreds of years, it will sprout more and more people, who own land and soil, giving much fortune. As such, people will be the eternal source, the eternal well spring, that will always give new life again and this source must be healthy. What we have struggled for is the safeguard, the endurance, and the breeding of our race, the nourishment of our children, the purity of our blood and the freedom and independence of our Fatherland.⁷⁵

Here, Hitler makes the link between birth and the farming community, placing the farmer, and particularly his wife, at the heart of National Socialist ideology, demanding that the community continually expand to promote the racial health of the nation.

Veit Harlan's film, *Die goldene Stadt*, was intended to propagate the ideals expressed above. The film itself is a sanctification of *Blut und Boden* philosophies, rejecting urbanisation and metropolitan depravity, whilst presenting the idyll of

the *Heimat* and the farm. The film equates these ideals with racial development, preventing the integration of the Slav into the racially pure farming community. The film was released in 1942 and won the President of the International Film Committee prize at the tenth International Film Festival (*Biennale*).⁷⁶ It was the second colour film to be produced in Germany, after *Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten*, in 1941.

The film opens with the main protagonist, Anuschka, taking a horse and carriage ride with a young engineer, Christian Leidwein, who has come from Prague to drain the local swamp. Anna reveals her fascination with Prague. Anna's mother originally came from the 'Golden City', but her unhappiness with rural life drove her to commit suicide in the swamp. Her father, Jobst, forbids Anna to go to the city and arranges a marriage between his daughter and a local farmer, Thomas. Even though Anna cares for Thomas, she is still compelled to leave for Prague, in an attempt to trace her heritage and to explore the city. An opportunity arises when Thomas and her father go to market in a nearby town. Encouraged by Maruschka, a farmhand, Anuschka takes a train for Prague, thinking that she will return before her father. In Prague, she stays with her slovenly aunt and her manipulative son, Toni, who soon discovers that Anna is the sole heir to her father's fortune and plots to marry her. After discrediting Christian and transforming Anuschka's appearance, Toni sleeps with her. She becomes pregnant. On hearing this news, Jobst disinherits her and marries the farmhand, Maruschka. Toni abandons Anna and resumes his long-standing affair with his mistress. In distress, Anna returns to the farm. The family is celebrating the marriage of Jobst and Maruschka. Anna is excluded from the celebrations. Broken hearted, Anna commits suicide in the swamp and, by doing so, follows the path of her mother: both victims of the 'Golden City'. The farm passes to Thomas. The final scenes in the film depict fields of corn, where the treacherous swamp had once been.

Harlan's film links his portrayal of rural life with the promotion of racial hygiene, eugenics and the familial cell. Making comparisons between the city of Prague and the Sudeten farmers, Harlan conveys his National Socialist message through characterisation, presenting four main character categories: that of the farmer, the city inhabitant, the Slav and, finally, the main protagonist, Anuschka, a naive girl, dazzled by the golden towers of Prague and dissatisfied with her own life on the farm. It is possible to trace the character of Anuschka through the film, highlighting her passage from the idyllic farm setting to the metropolis of Prague, where she encounters deceit and seduction, finally leading to her tragic death. In particular, the fate of Anuschka will be linked to her crime as a *Rassenschänderin* and comparisons to other portrayals in films from 1939 to 1945 will be drawn. These comparisons highlight the nature of sacrificial death of female characters in the films of the Reich and expose the message the RMVP was attempting to convey to the female audience.

The Rural Ideal and City Depravity. One of the central themes of *Die goldene Stadt* is the glorification of the farm. The farmer is presented as the backbone of the state. He is the apotheosis of ancient customs and traditions and an essential component of Germanic culture. In the opening scenes of the film, Anna dreams of an existence outside of this farming community. She is brought closer to the town of Prague by the arrival of the young engineer, Christian Leidwein, who encourages her independence from the homeland. In these first images, Anna tells Christian of her longing for Prague, the birthplace of her mother:

Anna: That water there, that's the same water that flows to Prague . . . All the people are standing there, on the old bridges . . . ah, the golden towers of the golden city. I would love to go there. But my father doesn't want me to. He hates the city. He says that it has poisoned his life and it will not poison mine. My father says, where one has his home, that is where he is best and there must he stay.

Christian: Your every third word is what your father says. And what do you say Anna? Who never ventures forth, Fräulein Anna, never comes home. That's an old saying too.

Anna's longing for Prague and her idealistic image of the city are illustrated at the outset. Christian notes that Anna's father forbids her from leaving the homeland. Harlan presents a distinctive portrait of the 'city type', here represented by Leidwein, and the farmer, demonstrated through the character of Jobst. This initial juxtaposition makes the clear distinction between city and rural ideologies. Harlan presents a retrogressive portrait of the farmer through the character of Jobst, who abides by tradition and rejects the city mentality, placing great import on farming life and its hereditary nature. For example, the moor is due to be cultivated by the young city engineer. Jobst opposes this modernising process as, the moor, 'has always been there'. The moor here is representative of the battle between traditionalism and modernity. Both Jobst and Christian's approach to the moor bolsters their character portrayal in Harlan's piece. Jobst attempts to convey his sense of traditionalism to Anna, who has inherited the rebelliousness of her mother. Born in Prague, her mother commits suicide in the moor, out of despair with the farming way of life. Jobst is adamant that Anna should not experience the same fate. He wants her to grow into the farming community, respecting her father's heritage: 'My daughter must stay here. She was born here, as I was myself. Grew up here, and will not leave here for the city.'

The distinction between the farmer and city gent is further emphasised by the difficulty of the city type to integrate into the farming community. Christian and his boss come to the farming community with the intention of assessing the marsh, both aliens to the community. Christian's boss does not appear in Billinger's play,

Der Gigant, on which Harlan's film is based. It is possible that he was added by Harlan in order to mock the 'city type'. Christian's boss attempts to ally himself with the farmers by emphasising his rural birthplace, which he obviously rejected in favour of a city existence. Anuschka's father invites Christian's boss to the farming festival, where he is ridiculed. He is presented as a prude, who has dressed in his city finery to mingle with the traditionally and practically dressed peasants. He does not join in with the 'wholesome fun' of the festival. The farmers invite him to bowl with them. In a gruesome scene, the city gent attempts to bowl, falls onto the bowling lane, and is pelted violently with bowling balls, whilst the onlookers roar with laughter. This torment is only stopped when Thomas intervenes. The 'game', however, is still seen in a jovial manner, and the city gent collects his things and leaves, clearly injured.

As a result of the distinction between the city and rural mentalities, Jobst asks that Christian be removed from the moor project. Christian arrives to say goodbye to Anna. As he leaves, he takes away her only connection with the birthplace of her mother, Prague, and her dreams of the city are intensified. Anna's desire to leave the homeland and travel is highlighted in their parting scene in which she gives Christian a photo, stating:

Anna: [Anna gives Christian a photo] Now take me out. Around the world.
To the golden city.

Christian: You have your fantasies of the golden towers. The reality is very
wretched, very wretched.

Christian offers Anna this warning, but she is still obsessed with the image of the golden city and, indeed, of Christian. Anna resents her father's interference and his dismissal of Christian propels her further from the idyll of the farm and into the arms of the city. Preventing a relationship between his daughter and Christian is of primary importance to Jobst, having already arranged a marriage between Anna and the local farmer, Thomas. Thomas is a wholesome, simple farmer, whose athleticism is presented in stark contrast to Christian Leidwein, described by the *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* as, 'a young, elegant man . . . something different to Anna's fiancé, the farmer Thomas'.⁷⁷

Through her engagement to Thomas, Anna is being geared for life as a farmer's wife and rural mother. National Socialist propaganda emphasised the link between agrarian life and the familial cell, signifying the link between racial biology, rural life and maternity. Fine art was a particularly effective medium for the conveyance of these aspects of Nazi ideology, through such paintings as Franz Eichhart's *Mother and Child*, Fritz Mackensen's *The Baby* and Adolf Wissel's *Farm Family from Kahlenberg*.⁷⁸ Hitler himself extended his thanks to the German rural mother stating, in 1935, 'in this hour, we want to thank the hundreds of thousands of

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Figure 18. Anna and Thomas. BAFA 5988

German women, who have again given us the most beautiful gift that they could give us; many hundreds of thousands of little children. They are the most beautiful and richest crop that a people can call its own.’⁷⁹ Women were encouraged to embrace this healthy, natural and, above all, productive lifestyle and were instructed, like Anna Jobst, to abandon hopes of an emancipated city existence. Women and the farming profession were seen to be ideally matched as both were dependent on fertility. Farming women were constantly reminded of their crucial role in the National Socialist State. Frau Hildegard von Rheden, female official for the *Reichsnährstand*, told them in 1934:

We thank Adolf Hitler for returning our Reich to the womb of *Völkisch* strength; the farming family. We talk about the farmer’s family not in a practical sense but in a racial-*Völkisch* sense. The greatest duty for farm – women is the preservation of the German race and the deferment of personal desires. We must develop our bodies and our spiritual sensitivities so that we can carry out our purpose, which is to rear honourable farmers and farmer’s wives. Our Reich Agriculture Minister, Darré, has helped lead us to victory over the false Gods of economy and the market. Our place is secure on our hereditary farms. We must show our gratitude by fulfilling our duties.⁸⁰

The women themselves, however, regarded the profession, not as the idyllic and rewarding existence as proclaimed by the Nazi ideologists, but as an exceptionally

hard existence. Hannelore Kessler estimated, from figures produced in *Völkischer Beobachter*, that approximately 19 per cent of the female population were engaged in farming or land work.⁸¹ Clifford Lovin adds that this was approximately 2.3 million women and that these women, representing 50 per cent of the land work force, did 75 per cent of the work.⁸² The discontent of these farming women led to the establishment of the land year for the BDM. In 1935 alone, 7,000 girls moved from the cities into the country in order to elevate the burden from the farming women. Promotional film footage gave this description of the programme:

At their work in the house, farm and garden, [the girls] become attached to their new home, to the soil they cultivate, to the fields and to the woods, to their neighbours and their comrades. Their pale cheeks become pink, their walk becomes free and proud. They become real human beings, get to know themselves, and the secrets of nature and life. They once more learn how to fold their hands and know that there are things in life that are holy.⁸³

Yet, despite this rosy picture of agricultural life, women and girls were unwilling to leave the city to reside in a more rustic setting. A document released by the Central Office of the German Labour Exchange, in March 1934, simply states, 'We have frequently observed that women fail to report to the labour exchange in order not to be drafted for agricultural work. Such behaviour will in future be prosecuted by the competent authorities.'⁸⁴ Tim Mason confirmed the reluctance of women to becoming farming assistants, stating:

the role of the farmer's wife had come to appear so unattractive that the sons and heirs of small farmers were having great difficulty in finding women to marry them: they had to act as housewives, mothers and labourers. Total exhaustion was the only possible outcome. The bitter irony of these reports ought not to have escaped those readers who had been so loud in their praise of the healthy attitudes to the family and to child bearing in the farming community.⁸⁵

In Harlan's 1942 film, Anna represented this growing dissatisfaction. She actively opposed her role as the prospective wife to Thomas, the farmer. Anuschka longed for the bustle of a city, especially Prague. She is presented in stark contrast to Maruschka, the farming woman, who later becomes Jobst's fiancée, who states, 'I am staying where I am . . . what the master orders, I'll do.' Anna openly rejects her role as a farmer's wife, defying her father's instructions, informing Thomas of her true desires:

Anna: I will marry you, Thomas. I have promised your father. You know me by now. What I don't want, I leave and I also won't be forced into by my father . . . I am a prisoner here. It is still not freedom.

The Negative Image of Women

Thomas: Freedom? What is that then?

Anna: I want to live my life the way I want. I want to marry when I want. That sort of freedom, for example. To be left to live my life the way I want. When I set a foot outside the house, no-one immediately asks me where I am going. When I had found a friend in Herr Leidwein, he gets thrown out of the door. 'Anna, you're riding incorrectly . . . ' 'Anna, you don't bother to do anything in the kitchen.' 'Anna you don't have any interest in the house.' 'Anna don't be a lady, you are a farming girl.'

Anna, determined to escape this fate, continues her flirtation with Prague. The scene above prepares the audience for Anna's journey to Prague in defiance of her father's wishes and her intended fate as a farmer's wife. This scene is preceded by a sequence in which Anna gazes intently into a pond. She sees her own face in the reflection, which dissolves into a portrait of the golden city, with its bridges and towers. Anna is transfixed by the image, seducing her and forcing her into rebellion. Her mother came originally from Prague, ending her unhappy life in the nearby swamp. Anna is enchanted not only by the city, but with the memory of her mother, for whom she felt 'incredible longing'. Anuschka yearns for her mother's city of origin. In the first scenes of the film, she shares her passion with Leidwein, who ironically has come to drain the swamp in which Anna's mother committed suicide. She explains, 'the people said that she always wanted to get away from her husband and her child and that she had been taken away by the water-man. She had always wanted to go back to Prague.'

The film emphasised that Anna's obsession with Prague had been inherited from her mother. The *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* noted that 'her great longing is the city of Prague, to which the golden towers and domes gave it this epithet. This longing was already in the girl's heart from birth, as her mother was from this golden world.'⁸⁶ Anna's mother becomes a symbol for the film. A city, Slavic woman, who could not assimilate herself into the farming tradition, she was an alien in the community. Anna's own longing for the city of Prague is a signal to the audience that, if she should go on this banned visit, she will await the same fate. The identical life patterns of Anna and her mother suggest the genetic inheritance of restlessness and the deep longing for city life, passed directly from mother to daughter. This theme is expressed in other films of the Reich, serving to expose the social misfit and resulting in the death of the alien. It is interesting to note that it is always the mother, and not the father, who is the alien to the community. Men are presented as wholesome and akin to the National Socialist spirit, whilst women are the disruptive element. This theme is also portrayed in the 1945 Harlan film, *Kolberg*. In this film, Nettelbeck tells Maria of his concerns

regarding his son Klaus, who has just returned from a Viennese music school to the farming community, linking the social misfit to the big city:

Nettelbeck: I'm worried about Klaus.

Maria: Klaus?

Nettelbeck: I shouldn't have sent him off to the Viennese music school. He's no longer a farmer. He takes after his mother. She was never a farmer's wife.

Klaus later drowns (like Anna in *Die goldene Stadt* and Dorothea in *Jud Süß*), attempting to rescue his violin, a symbol of his education, the city and his departure from and rejection of the homeland. Misfits, as demonstrated by Klaus, Anna and Anna's mother, are confined to the waters. This 'restlessness', inherited by Klaus and Anna, bears special significance when considered as an integral part of the image of the 'alien' and explained by National Socialist perceptions of hereditary traits and genetics.

The city itself is blamed for the creation of such 'misfits'. According to Hitler,

the city lacked all sense of a national duty. Our cities of the present lack the outstanding value of national community which, we must therefore not be surprised to find, sees no symbol of itself in the cities. The inevitable result is a desolation whose practical effect is the total indifference of the big city dweller to the destiny of his city.⁸⁷

The city held particular dangers for the young. In a study of Pomerania during the Weimar Republic, Shelley Baranowski notes that 'church periodicals were incessant and obsessive . . . [regarding] ills they associated with urban society. Prostitution, divorce, relationships outside marriage, pornography, abortion, youth crime, the state of education, experimental theatre, feminism and alcoholism all won close attention.'⁸⁸ The local press warned its youth not to seek entertainment or employment in larger cities, urging the young to resist the blandishments of city life. An article entitled 'Stay at Home!' portrayed the *Großstadt* as a witches' cauldron bubbling with 'immaturity, callousness, insolence and frivolity'. Expecting to find excitement and better work opportunities, the young would only find their upbringing values and customs ridiculed. 'The Metropolis is pitiless: every year it heartlessly casts aside hundreds of spiritual, moral and economic casualties like so many squeezed lemons.'⁸⁹ Harlan draws upon the above Protestant culture to develop the portrayal of the city and youth. It is yet another example of the retreat into a mythological and customs-based culture, which was intended to glorify the Germanic types as the racial *Idealtypus* and to disguise German progression in modernity. Harlan's film draws upon the evils of city life, transporting the rebellious Anna into a life she is ill prepared for, emphasising the idyllic existence to be

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Figure 19. Anna enjoys a city existence with her cousin, Toni

gained from staying on the land: the gala horse race, the outdoor pursuits, the safety of the farm and its trustworthy inhabitants.

Jobst and Thomas have to leave the farm for a few days and despite the warnings from her father and Christian, Anna leaves for Prague, planning to be home before their return. On her arrival in Prague, Anuschka finds it difficult to integrate into the city. She is presented as a naïve farm girl, who, as a result of her innocence, is led along by a series of amoral people. This re-emphasises Harlan's theme of city depravity. All blame is placed on Prague and its wicked inhabitants. Anuschka's realisation of her folly at the end of the film and her decision to commit suicide for the benefit of the community reassures the film audience of her ideological purity and innocence: her sacrifice representing a return to Nazi principles. Anuschka's innocence is illustrated by Harlan through the use of a symbol; her clothing. In the farming village, she complains about a dress made for her for the festival. She believes the dress to be too long and unsuitable for dancing. As the film was shot in Agfacolor, colour is of primary importance. The dress is of pure white, symbolising her innocence.

When Anna arrives in Prague, she is dressed in traditional costume. Having been reunited, Christian takes Anuschka to the opera, where she is frowned upon by city women. Yet Anna looks fresh faced and stands out as a natural beauty

rather than one created by make-up. Later, in his attempt to seduce Anna, Toni, her cousin, uses her clothing and the opera scene to his advantage:

Toni: Yes, Anuschka. When we go out tonight, it's not possible for you to go out in that dress. Look at all the people here. Were you dressed like that when you went to the opera last night? [Pointing at her farming dress]

Anna: [Hurt] Yes . . .

Toni: What a cavalier, that Leidwein! Using a young girl as sport for all the people at the Opera . . . It makes no difference to me . . . Tell you what, you've got a bit of money . . . I'll suggest something to you. My friend works in the top fashion house in the square. We'll make you over from top to toe.

Toni dresses Anna in city apparel, in which she seems uncomfortable. She constantly fiddles with her veil, trying to push it out of her eyes. The dress she wears now is red. Toni tells her that 'nobody in Prague will believe that you are a country cousin'. Thus with a lifting of Anuschka's skirt and the appearance of make-up on her face, her farming roots are quickly forgotten. The *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* noted that she has taken 'off her beautiful farming clothes, and looks like a big town dolly bird'.⁹⁰ This type of fashion was often linked to the temptations of urban life, with women paying more attention to appearances than to feminine duties. Anna keeps this same dress on throughout the film. As the situation with Toni becomes increasingly unbearable, Anna's dress becomes more and more tatty, losing its colour, its life and its beauty, symbolic of the course of Anna's visit to Prague and the deterioration of her dreams of this Golden city.

Christian, however, respects Anna's upbringing in his disapproval of her city attire, making him distinct from the Slavic Toni:

Christian: Anna, have you painted your lips?

Anna: [Defiantly] It's modern. Isn't that right, Toni? Don't you like it, Herr Engineer?

Christian: I preferred you in your traditional dress. It looked much more beautiful.

Toni: That's entirely a matter of taste, Herr Engineer!

Anna's hostility toward Christian in this scene is generated by Toni, who pointed out to Anna that Christian was wearing a ring on his marriage finger:

Anna: Nothing is going on with Herr Leidwein. He was only working on the moor.

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Toni: Yes and . . . ?

Anna: And nothing, Toni.

Toni: That's all right then. He's engaged.

Anna: He is not engaged, Toni.

Toni: . . . he is. I saw an engagement ring on his hand yesterday.

Anna: Perhaps he was wearing just an ordinary ring.

Toni: I think that it symbolised something quite different. But don't worry Anuschka. You haven't fallen into the hands of an adulterer. Prague is . . . not for a young girl.

Christian's true marital status is never established. Christian, the suspected adulterer and Toni, the seducer, are once again juxtaposed with Thomas, Anna's fiancé, who is wholesome, at one with nature, at home on the farm, and athletic, winning the gala horse race at the festival. The presentation of the farm and the city in *Die goldene Stadt* emphasises notable differences, all conforming to Nazi ideology, intended to glorify the peasant, curb the exodus to the city and prevent the collapse of agriculture, essential for German autarky.

The Image of the Slav. In National Socialist racial ideology, the Slavs, along with the Jews, were considered to be an inferior race. A propaganda leaflet, distributed in Berlin in 1940, defined the position of the Slav to the Aryan, 'He is inferior to every German . . . never forget that you are a member of the Master race.'⁹¹ This was exploited in Harlan's film, through his portrait of the Slavick character. The Czechs and the Germans are depicted in distinct roles and are separated by accents, to produce a clear distinction. The Catalogue for Forbidden Films reports, 'all "good" people in the film are German, all "bad" people are Czech, and this is emphasised by the different ways of speaking German'.⁹²

The first Czech character the audience encounters is Anuschka's aunt, Toni's mother, who expresses her relief that her niece has escaped from the farm and returned to the birthplace of her mother. Anuschka's aunt is lazy, constantly drinks and smokes and is unclean, wearing an unbuttoned red silk top and dressed in a slovenly manner. Her house is untidy and she lacks social graces. We later discover that Toni is the illegitimate son of a Russian officer. Her character and appearance shock Anna. The comparison between the two female characters in the scene is completed when Anna is given a guided tour of the house and their shop, which is downstairs. The shop stocks tacky souvenirs of Prague, cigarettes and alcohol. Anna is offered a liqueur, and when she refuses, her aunt drinks both glasses herself.

Anna's aunt takes Anna to meet Toni, where is working at the restaurant, *Die goldene Pretzel*. The first image of Toni is a negative one: he is rude to his mother on her arrival and having an affair with his female boss, who is of dubious morals. After having ended his affair with her, his boss accuses him of stealing silver cutlery

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and the audience is informed that Toni is to be interviewed by the police over the theft. When Toni discovers that Anna is the sole heir to her father's farm, he resigns and decides to seduce and marry the naive farm girl in order to obtain rights to the estate. Toni's seduction of Anna is methodical. As has been illustrated, Toni disposes of his immediate rival, Leidwein, by casting doubt upon his marital status. He then takes Anna dancing and changes her appearance, showing her the delights of city life, drawing her further into her idealistic image of Prague:

Anna: Toni, I must dance! I could shout out to all the world! Shout really loud!

Toni: Shout, Anuschka! Dance! You look absolutely divine! Nobody in Prague will know you are a country cousin!

Anna: You're so kind!

Toni: [Drawing Anna close to him] You think so?

Anna still misses her home and informs Toni that she must return before her father discovers her absence. Toni persuades Anna to stay, promising her lifelong commitment. That evening, Toni seduces Anna, despite her protestations and reluctance. As a result, Anna becomes pregnant. Her fertility as an Aryan mother is emphasised in this scene in which she discusses her predicament with an infertile old woman, Frau Hammond. Anna is an instinctive mother and does not regret her pregnancy, only her choice of partner and separation from the homeland.

Hammond: Should you go to a doctor?

Anna: No.

Hammond: Why?

Anna: I already know what is wrong with me, Frau Hammond.

Hammond: Does Toni know?

Anna: No.

Hammond: Are you unhappy?

Anna: Oh no, Frau Hammond . . . I am so warm . . . but I can only cry. But it is not sad, but I can only cry.

Hammond: Fräulein Anna, I don't know . . .

Anna: You can't possibly know, Frau Hammond, you have never experienced it.

Hammond: A child needs lots of love. It is not as easy as you think.

Anna's unhappiness is exacerbated by her father's decision to disinherit her and marry Maruschka, who persuaded Anna to leave for Prague. This action prompts Toni to abandon Anna, as no financial gain can be derived from the relationship. He returns to his former mistress. But Anna has been irreparably damaged and

her German blood infected. She has committed the ultimate crime of blood sin and race desecration. Once again, like Dorothea in *Jud Süß*, Anna cannot fulfil her role as a German mother. According to National Socialist ideology, Anna has betrayed her roots and her racial heritage. In May 1942, a Dresden local newspaper carried an editorial, entitled *Shield of Women*, which stated:

Every nation can overcome political subjugation, but not racial infection . . . The nation which becomes a victim of racial sexual chaos is bound to perish . . . [The Rassen-schänderin] would lose everything from it, even her beauty, as there's no beauty without honour and faithfulness . . . She'd expel herself from her people just as a soldier who breaks an oath or cannot remain in the ranks of fighters.⁹³

Anna has expelled herself from her community, threatening to bring a Slavic child into it. She has also betrayed her farming roots, choosing city life and rebellion over the protection afforded to her by the homeland. She has disobeyed her father, who knew too well the dangers of the city and its people. But moreover she has betrayed her community and her people. The *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* warned:

Whoever forgets his position in these times, whoever makes common cause with foreigners and possibly mixes with them will be severely punished. It is quite unthinkable that a true German girl, a truly German woman, should ever flirt with a foreigner. This attraction to anything foreign, which is devoid of instinct, perhaps even a sentimental compassion, will be no excuse. In the fateful struggle of our people, anyone who lets himself go will be punished without mercy; he does not belong to us.⁹⁴

Fraternalisation with foreigners was becoming a problem all too real for the Reich authorities. Beginning in 1939, the Reich began to receive foreign workers, intended as farmhands and manual labour. Goebbels recognised the threat to the 'Master Race', writing in his diary in that same year, 'careful preparations must be taken in order to accustom ourselves to the hundreds of thousands of foreign workers currently employed within the Reich. The danger exists that intercourse between these workers and German women will cause a gradual infiltration of our race. This danger must be checked by every possible means.'⁹⁵ Hence, legal measures were taken against women associating with foreigners. For the month of April 1942 alone, five different local newspapers reported the sentencing of women who had contact with foreign workers, ranging from eighteen months penal servitude for 'intimate contact',⁹⁶ to two years penal servitude for 'forbidden intercourse'.⁹⁷ This drive to prevent women from having relations with foreign workers, mostly from the East, coincided with the release of *Die goldene Stadt* and the re-release of another film depicting a similar theme, *Dorf im Roten Sturm* (Town in the Red Storm, 1941). Not only had the National Socialists exacted a legal penalty for

fraternisation, but they had launched a simultaneous propaganda campaign, of which *Die goldene Stadt* was an integral part.

The campaign crossed national borders, extending itself to other parts of the Reich. Concern was voiced over the screening of the film in Slavic lands, so potent was its message to the audience. The SS police chief in Serbia contacted the head of the SS and German police at the Ministry of the Interior, noting that the film showed how 'Czech influence may be gained through the blood of a German farmer and how a Czech lout can succeed in destroying the father's blood in a German girl. The film shows directly to the Slavs how one can so easily succeed in breaking into a farmer's family, despite all the racial propaganda.'⁹⁸ The fear of Czech audience reaction to the storyline presented in *Die goldene Stadt* was exacerbated by Harlan's obvious inaccuracies in his portrayals, pointed out to Tießler. He noted that the setting of Prague was totally inappropriate for the theme of anti-Slavic propaganda as the architecture was clearly German in style, and it was almost unthinkable that 'a German border farmer would speak with a Czech accent'.⁹⁹ More seriously, in January 1943, the Reich Protectorate for Bohemia and Moravia contacted Hippler with regards to the film's message and the problems the release of the film would cause in this area. SS *Sturmabführer* Wolf, head of Propaganda and Culture Politics in the Protectorate, informed Hippler that Anna's theme in the film was composed by Smetana, a Czech, and not a German, composer, which detracted from the film's portrayal of a culturally bereft society of barbarians. His second objection was that Christian's firm from Prague was named *Nemeczek*, which, when translated into German, means '*Deutschlein*' or 'Little German'. Most damning was the condemnation of Prague itself, which Wolf reminded Hippler, was 'a German town, with its wonderful architecture, the work of a German architect and was also the ruling seat of the German Kaiser himself'. All these aspects prevented the release of the film in the Protectorate despite Wolf's admission that the film was 'artistically and technically of the highest standard and presents the problem of city and country in so urgent a manner.'¹⁰⁰ The difficulties associated with screening the film in the Protectorate prompted the RMVP to block further productions with a similar theme, dictating that 'for the foreseeable future, no film will portray the problems of the people of Bohemia and Moravia against the backdrop of Prague. The film itself is unsuitable for the Protectorate and its screening is forbidden.'¹⁰¹

Due to the very sensitive issues highlighted above, the original ending to Billinger's play had to be revised. The play concluded with Jobst dying in the swamp and Anna, Toni and their child inheriting the farm. Harlan submitted these final scenes for approval. They were rejected by Goebbels. Harlan recalled that 'Goebbels had the opposite view to me. In coarse terms, he began to remark that this "little country whore" had brought a "horrible little Slovak" into this world . . . and that, "this brat", the future heir to the farm, was going to "play at being a

country man”.’¹⁰² Hence, Goebbels dictated the final scenes of the film in accordance with Nazi ideology concerning women who brought disgrace upon their family, their origins, their heritage and even their race. Goebbels dictated, ‘The girl must die at the end of the piece. You have told me that you wanted to make a film against the rural exodus. And what have you done? You have transformed a repugnant Czech citizen into a farmer inheriting the family enterprise.’¹⁰³ The message regarding blood sin was propagated at a politically and psychologically crucial time. The message conveyed by the RMVP, with Anuschka as the vehicle, was directed at every German girl. Söderbaum herself noted that of all her films, this one, amongst others, was to be regarded as a ‘women’s film’. In an interview for German television in 1993, she stated, ‘I named these films “men’s films”, [such as] . . . *Der große König*, I didn’t enjoy playing those roles . . . They were never my films. My films were *Jugend*, *Die Reise nach Tilsit*, *Verwehte Spüren*, *Die goldene Stadt*, they were mine.’¹⁰⁴

The Death of Anuschka. Accounts regarding the end of the film seem to be unanimous. Harlan, Söderbaum and Goebbels’ diaries all attest to the changes made by Goebbels to the film’s conclusion. In his first entry on the film, on 11 May 1942, he wrote:

Ufa showed me their new colour film. Harlan has brought a truly masterful performance to life. The quality of the colour is much better than previous German colour films. He has achieved the quality of many of the brand new American productions. In terms of actors, the film shows some masterly performances. Harlan is a true virtuoso in the direction of people. Unfortunately, the film hasn’t got a liberating ending. The innocent is driven to his death and the guilty parties have taken advantage of it. I demand that the ending is modified. This is to be done with a little help. Then the film will once again be a masterpiece of German cinematic art.¹⁰⁵

Typically, Goebbels began with praise for Harlan’s work but continued to demand modifications. The conclusion of the film was of particular concern to the Minister. Referring to the character of Anuschka, Goebbels noted that the ‘innocent’, Anna’s father, was not to die at the end of the piece. A diary entry one week later shows continued interference. On 15 May, he wrote:

In the afternoon, I discussed a whole series of film problems with Hippler. I gave Harlan orders regarding the reorganisation of the end of the film, *Die goldene Stadt* . . . It is necessary that the conflict is played out right up to the end, even if there is no ‘Happy End.’ Harlan is fully in agreement with my decision. I have the impression of late that we are producing too many farming based films . . . Next season, they should not be allowed to premiere heavy and serious farming films, when the people demand cheer and relaxation.¹⁰⁶

Goebbels rejected the 'happy ending' of the piece with Anna and Toni settled on the farm. He also confirmed that she was to die as a result of her guilt. Goebbels also gives a further example of the RMVP's push toward entertainment films from 1942. Some previous and certainly subsequent farming films adopted a lighter comedic or romantic theme, such as *Hochzeitsnacht* (Wedding Night, Carl Boese, 1941) and *Kohlhiesels Töchter* (Kohlhiesel's Daughters, Kurt Hoffmann, 1943). This statement, written by Goebbels in May 1942, represents a shift in emphasis in the *Gesellschaftsfilme* produced in the Third Reich. Subsequent films sacrificed 'realism' for entertainment and the cinema of distraction, as has been demonstrated. From this diary entry, Goebbels directed German film towards 'cheer and relaxation'. 'Serious films' were mainly replaced by musical extravaganzas and comedy from 1942 to the fall of the Reich. *Die goldene Stadt* with its serious theme was a film of a dying genre.

From this diary entry regarding *Die goldene Stadt*, it is quite clear that the film was not intended as pure entertainment. It must therefore be analysed in terms of its propagandistic message. Goebbels' influence on the final piece is clear, as Söderbaum confirms in her memoirs:

Anuschka went into the water . . . or rather into the marsh. Yet, beforehand, I was supposed to say, 'I have loved my homeland too little, therefore I must die.' In his green pencil, Goebbels had personally written the dialogue of this alternative end scene. Veit had made a little change to this, 'Father forgive me for not having loved my homeland as much as you.'¹⁰⁷

Harlan gives an almost identical account in his memoirs, noting that, 'Anuschka had to perish. I undertook a project of modifications in which Anna died, according to the received orders. But Goebbels demanded that Anuschka make a declaration which left no doubt about the political plan. She had to state, "I have not loved my homeland enough, and it is because of this that I must die."¹⁰⁸ Further to this, Söderbaum described her role in the film, in an unpublished interview:

I was a farmer's daughter in that film. The father didn't allow her to go to Prague, to the town, because her mother . . . has been from the town and she was very unhappy and she always wanted to go back to the town and . . . her mother killed herself in the swamp. And one day the father and the young boy in the house, they went to the town and the girl went too, with the help of Maruschka, that was the lady there, . . . who wanted to marry the father you see. And Anuschka . . . went to Prague and there she had a love story with a young man. And she should get a baby . . . and he didn't want her any longer because he wanted her money and he wanted her farm and all those things. When she went back to the farm, there was her father sitting and he had just married this lady there and they didn't take any notice of her. Not at all. So . . . she ran off. And at first the father didn't say anything but after a while, he was thinking, 'My word! Maybe she

has gone to the swamp!’ So they run out and the father, he drowned in the swamp . . . And the end was that the father was dead and the girl gets the young man in the house and it was a very happy ending. But when Goebbels saw that, he said, ‘No, it’s not possible that the German father’s daughter . . . gets a child from a Prague, Czechoslovakian boy of the town.’ So I had to play all the end of the story . . . again. And so the girl Anuschka also had to die in the swamp . . .¹⁰⁹

The actual text of the concluding scenes confirms the dialogue recalled by Söderbaum and Harlan:

Mummy, mummy, Father did not receive me. I’ve come to you. You see, I’m going the same way as you. Mother, I hear you. You praise me. Mummy . . . You were right father, you were right. You are always right. Thomas, forgive me now. I was not good to you. Toni, God will judge you. I have forgiven you. A light! A light! Mummy, I’m coming! Forgive me, Father, for hurting you so much! Father, forgive me for not having loved my home as much as you!

The political message, as Harlan states, is clear. Anuschka has committed the ultimate sin for a woman living under the auspices of the Third Reich, blood sin, rendering her useless to her farming community as a mother or citizen. In death, she is forgiven for not having disrupted the community. The *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* noted, ‘Now a great peace comes over the stray who has lost her way. She feels that she can never be loved by the home again . . . she goes the same way as her mother.’¹¹⁰ She is forced to die, like so many other female characters in the films of the Third Reich. It was impossible to show a farmer’s daughter raising a Slavic child within the farming community, the embodiment of Nazi *Blut und Boden* ideology and the idyllic home of the pure Aryan. This racial sanctuary could not have been ruined by the appearance of a mixed breed child, inheriting his father’s genes and then inheriting the farm itself. Thus Anuschka, and, more importantly, her child are forced to perish.

After having discovered Anna’s corpse, Jobst decides to pass the farm to Thomas in the final scene:

Jobst: My time with the soil is up. My child is dead. [To Thomas] You loved her the most. You must inherit the farm. Do a better job than I did. Take that dreadful moor away.

Thomas cultivates the moor and the final shot shows a field of corn, with the graves of Anna and her mother in the middle. The *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* stated, ‘Where the menacing and unfruitful moor covered the area, stands an abundance of golden, ripe corn.’¹¹¹

The community thrives after the death of Anna, which has prompted the cultivation of the moor. The nature of her death is also significant in other ways. Anna drowns herself in the swamp, like her mother, stressing hereditary continuation. The swamp was used frequently by Reich propagandists and leaders as a symbol. In another film of the period, re-released in 1941, *Dorf im Roten Sturm*, previously released as *Friesennot* in 1935, a young farm girl, Mette, is subject to the same fate for the same crime. The film was re-released as a part of an anti-Bolshevik campaign in the war years and used in conjunction with the war newsreels to strengthen the population during Operation Barbarossa.¹¹² In the film, German Frisian farmers settled near the Volga, when they are invaded by Bolsheviks, who tax them and intimidate them. Mette begins a relationship with a young Russian officer and the Frisians exact a rustic punishment on her for fraternisation:

- Step-father: Where is Mette?
Farmer: With the Russian.
Step-father: I don't believe that . . . Mette wouldn't throw herself at a foreigner.
Farmer: Her mother was a foreigner.
Step-father: Ah, but her father was a Frisian. Our blood is thicker.
Farmer: She is with the Russian!
Step-father: She'll be responsible for her own fate! [The girl is dragged to the swamp]
Mette: Where are we going? I want to go home.
Step-father: You no longer have a home! [They leave her to perish. Of her own accord, she walks into the swamp, assured of her destiny.]

The above scene demonstrates the similarities between Anuschka and Mette. Mette's mother was also foreign, both fathers considered their blood to be thicker and were proved wrong with both girls inheriting the rebellious traits of their mothers. Both girls die in the swamp due to their fraternisation with Eastern Slavs. Drowning itself appears to be a symbol for women involved in forbidden sexual intercourse in the films of the Third Reich. Dorothea, raped by the Jew Süß, in *Jud Süß*, drowns in the lake, ashamed and disgraced, as she cannot fulfil her role as a pure Aryan mother. In the case of Dorothea, she takes her life in a lake, symbolising cleansing properties. Dorothea is then pure enough to become a symbol for the town's folk to rebel against the Jew and his accomplices. The case of Mette and Anuschka is different. Dorothea was raped, absolving her from some of the blame and enhancing the criminality of the Jew. Mette and Anna chose their fate by engaging in a sexual act of their own free will. Their fate is altered accordingly.

Mette and Anuschka drown in a swamp with more ominous overtones. The theme of the swamp as a monster is developed in the film, with Anna referring to

the *Wassermann* (Water-Man). Mythological connections are continued with Christian referring to Anna as ‘*eine Hexe*’ (a witch). The director, Harlan, perceived his presentation of the swamp as beautiful natural phenomenon, but that interpretation can be altered according to life experiences, with Anna and her father signifying danger to the familial cell.¹¹³ It can also be said that both Mette and Anna die in the swamp as it is symbolic of the soil they have betrayed. In November 1937, Himmler spoke at Bad Tölz noting that in ancient times, homosexuals were drowned in swamps, commenting that ‘this was no punishment but simply the extinction of abnormal life’.¹¹⁴ In his analysis of the speech, George Mosse adds that

there was no feeling of revenge on the part of the executioners as the homosexual literally vanished. Here the reality and symbolism are made to coincide. The victim sinks of his own weight into the swamp. No human hand helps him die and his life is snuffed out as if it had never existed at all. Thus nature rectifies her own mistakes . . . the outsider was not merely killed. He was supposed never to have existed at all. The death of the outsider was usually sudden, unclear or lonely.¹¹⁵

Anna and Mette died a lonely death, rejected by society and their reputation tainted. The significance of the swamp death raises a number of issues. Firstly, it is possible to suggest connections between the homosexual and the *Rassenschänderin*. Both are unable, or refuse, to produce children, alienating them from their biological purpose of National Socialism. *Das Schwarze Korps* of 22 May 1935, noted the connection between homosexuality, blood sin and a swamp death:

Just as we have adopted the old Germanic approach to the question of marriage between alien races, so we must also, in assessing the racially pernicious symptom of degeneracy known as homosexuality, revert to the Nordic principle that degenerates be exterminated, [by] drowning in a bog and fen.¹¹⁶

Drowning in a marsh is identified as a symbol for the extinction of degeneracy. Both Anna and Mette are guilty of racial pollution, considered a form of racial degeneracy in the Reich. Secondly, the death represents a return to and deification of nature. Finally, the deaths of both girls are in accordance with traditional rustic punishments for sexual crime.

Anna and Mette are exterminated of their own free will and make no further impact on the racial balance of their respective rural communities. They both sacrificed their lives for the benefit of their community and sacrificed the individual for the good of the whole. Both films are set in farming communities. Both mothers are of foreign extraction. Both girls inherited the rebellious traits of their mothers and not the sturdy traditionalism of their fathers. Both Anna and Mette were led astray by Eastern Slavs. Both Anna and Mette committed suicide in a boggy moor.

With the release of both films within a year of each other and the influx of foreign labour, the political and racial message was unequivocally clear.

Die goldene Stadt became one of the great cinematic success stories of the Third Reich and one of its most honoured films. Goebbels wrote in his diary on 24 July, 'Later in the evening, we saw the great Harlan film *Die goldene Stadt*. The end of the film, as I desired, was dramatic and moving. It will have to become one of the great masterpieces of German cinematic art and film direction.'¹¹⁷ On 4 September, he cooed over the film's success at the Biennale,¹¹⁸ and, on the 30th of the same month, Goebbels proudly gave Erwin Rommel a private screening.¹¹⁹ The film was chosen for 'special presentation', at the Berlin Art Week on 31 August 1942.¹²⁰ The film was released in selected Occupied Territories with reported success. In April 1944, the German European Radio Service reported that 'if you strolled along the Champs Elysees after tea, you would be surprised to see enormous queues outside the Normandie cinema . . . despite a certain prejudice of a few Paris cinema goers against German films . . . more and more people are going . . . every night. *La Ville Dorée*, featuring Kristina Söderbaum, had . . . a great success.'¹²¹ In Sander's youth survey, ninety-six questionnaires stated that they enjoyed the film, gaining more positive responses than *Jud Süß*, which received ninety-two.¹²² However, the film did not enjoy universal success. One month previously, a SD report had noted that Belgian Catholics had launched a protest over the film, stating that it was 'against the laws of the Catholic faith'.¹²³ Harlan had cinematic success with a politically and ideologically charged film. This trend of targeting the female audience in Harlan's films began in 1939 with the production of *Die Reise nach Tilsit*.

Male and Female Representations of Adultery

Introduction

With the family as the key expression of feminine identity in the Nazi State, it is surprising that film under National Socialism chose to portray adultery as a central theme. The majority of these adulterous images appeared in wartime productions, which at first glance appears even more bizarre, when one considers the difficulties presented to marriage at such a time, including separation and infidelity. Perceptions of adultery in the Third Reich were based on gender distinctions. Adultery was considered acceptable behaviour for men in certain circumstances. Alfred Rosenberg, the primary Nazi ideologist, commented that adultery, on the part of the husband, was to be permitted if the marriage was childless, whilst Gregor Strasser placed no limits on the practice, confidently asserting, '*Doppelte Morale? Jawohl!*'.¹²⁴ Hence, propaganda countering infidelity was particularly targeted at women. A German home service radio broadcast of 28 April 1944 warned against the temptations facing women left alone on the home front:

The Negative Image of Women

The courage of women in wartime lies in their resistance to stealthy temptations. Conditions of war may cause some to give way to lust but the courage of steadfast women ignores the saying that, 'things are different in war time.' Only those peoples whose women are the servants and priests of the family will achieve victory.¹²⁵

This double morality, defined by gender, was reflected in the films of the Third Reich, with Veit Harlan's *Die Reise nach Tilsit* (Journey to Tilsit, Veit Harlan, 1939) showing the acceptable face of male infidelity and his later production *Opfergang* (The Sacrifice, Veit Harlan, 1944), along with Helmut Käutner's *Romanze im Moll* (Romance in a Minor Key, Helmut Käutner, 1943), demonstrating that women were not forgiven for the same 'crime' in the Reich. This section will briefly look at the two images of adulterer and adulteress and provide an overview of these films, by analysing the themes they raised. It is perhaps more revealing to discuss the increasing pressure placed on the RMVP to withdraw these themes in wartime and male rejection of the image of infidelity from 1943. The image was transformed as a direct result of wartime pressures and public reaction, becoming one of the most controversial cinematic themes of the Third Reich. It is even more revealing when one compares male complaints over the image to the box office success of the films on the home front. The image provided cause for distress for male soldiers on the front lines and yet provided a popular form of entertainment for the women they left behind.

Portrayals of adultery were causing the RFK concern by September 1942. In a report concerning the film *Nacht ohne Abschied*, Tießler informed Goebbels of the current trend in German cinema and its dangers for wartime morale. In the 1942 film, the husband is unfaithful to his wife whilst on a business trip and boasts of his conquest during the course of the film. Such a portrayal disturbed Tießler, who made a number of suggestions, modifying the plot. His suggestions were centred on the female characters in the film. Firstly, he commented that the husband's infidelity could be blamed on the marriage itself, as the couple were childless, noting that his adulterous behaviour was 'because she has no children. On these grounds, she recognises that her marriage did not give her what she had hoped it would.' Tießler's second scenario was to make the mistress a 'dizzy' character, presenting no real threat to the wife or the marriage and finally, he suggested that the wife herself begin an affair with her riding instructor. This final possibility, with the wife also committing adultery, was immediately rejected as the riding instructor 'also has a duty as a husband and cannot shirk the responsibility of his work'. Tießler noted that her husband's absence on a business trip was no excuse for her to enjoy the same 'indulgence'. Portrayals of infidelity in wartime held particular difficulties for the RMVP. Tießler commented that whilst

this could be considered in peacetime, for war time it must be absolutely rejected. One must imagine someone on leave . . . This holiday will come to an end. Perhaps on the penultimate day of his leave, he goes to see this film with his wife. He has previously had to endure months or years without his wife. Understandably, he will consider that, in this time of separation, her previous . . . love for the husband has left her.¹²⁶

Tießler believed that, in wartime, it was crucial to stress the twin issues of ‘comradeship’ and ‘the love and fidelity of the wife’.¹²⁷ Given the difficulties of wartime relationships, it was important to reassure the front-line soldiers of Tießler’s last point, and this was reflected in films taking the theme of marital infidelities in the Reich. That the theme was actually considered for screening at all proved controversial.

The Adulterer: Die Reise nach Tilsit
(*The Journey to Tilsit, Veit Harlan, 1939*)

The release of *Die Reise nach Tilsit* in 1939 did indeed prove controversial, not least because it portrayed the private life of the Reich Minister himself on the screen.¹²⁸ The film retold Hermann Sudermann’s tale of the marital tribulations of a couple in a fishing village, which was later transferred onto film by F.W. Murnau in 1927 under the title *Sunrise*. The husband, Endrik, falls madly in love with a cosmopolitan Pole, Madlyn, and rejects his simple but homely wife, Elska, for his new flame. Elska, however, refuses to let Endrik go so easily and begins a battle to keep him, using his son, Jons, as the main weapon. Torn between his son and the love of his mistress, Endrik seeks to remedy the situation by attempting to murder Elska. He takes her on a visit to the town of Tilsit to sell their horse, a wedding gift from Elska’s father. On the way, Elska realises Endrik’s dreadful intentions and silently accepts her fate. The couple spend a wonderful day in Tilsit and realise that their marriage is worth saving. On the way back, however, a terrible storm wrecks the boat and Elska is thrown into the waters. Endrik returns to the familial home, ridden with guilt. Elska is washed up on the beach and kept warm by Madlyn, who realises her folly and disappears into the night. The couple are reunited and decide to save their marriage for the sake of their son and their love for each other.

Goebbels saw that the film was more personal than just a simple tale of fisher folk, commenting in his diary, on 11 October 1939, that the film had ‘too torturous a topic; a marital tragedy. Harlan depicts his own situation and not in very good taste at that.’¹²⁹ Goebbels referred here to Harlan’s divorce from the German actress, Hilde Körber, in order to marry the Swede, and star of the film, Kristina Söderbaum.¹³⁰ But perhaps more poignant at that time was the Minister’s own affair with the Czech actress Lida Baarova. The parallels between the blonde Elska and

the dark, Slavic Madlyn, and his wife, Magda, and his mistress, Baarova, were noted by Harlan in his memoirs. He recalled:

The film was good, but it incited the anger of Goebbels. I succeeded in finding out why. His own liaison with the Czech actress Lida Baarova could have been related to some scenes in the film. We didn't mean for this to be obvious, but the resemblance to the affair was so poignant that Magda Goebbels left the Minister's projection room in anger . . . That was a scandal. Goebbels was foaming at the mouth with rage. He stated that the film was a monument of bad taste. He claimed that I had displayed my own marital problems with Hilde Körber on the screen and told me that I had, 'no right to wash my dirty linen in public.'¹³¹

In her memoirs, Söderbaum confirmed Harlan's report of Goebbels' reaction, stating that Goebbels screamed that the film was in 'outrageously bad taste'.¹³² Such was Goebbels' anger at the film that he delayed the release. It was finally premiered on 2 November 1939.¹³³ The film was deemed to be acceptable for screening in the post-war era despite its obvious promotion of the family unit and racial overtones. A letter from the Information and the Cultural Allied High Command to Majestic Film, the film's production company and a subsidiary of Tobis, on 17 September 1951, stated that 'the subject matter of *Die Reise nach Tilsit* [is] politically quite acceptable to the Western Occupation Powers'.¹³⁴

The film begins with Elske alone in bed. She turns over and discovers that Endrik is not there. He is with his mistress, Madlyn Sapierska, who is renting a room in their home. Scenes in the film confirm Madlyn's racial background. Endrik, the rural fisherman, rejects her city existence, stating, 'I wouldn't want to live with you in your Warsaw,' allying Madlyn with the city. If the audience were to miss the subtle inferences, such as her Polish name, Sapierska, and her place of residence, Warsaw, her status is confirmed by a young boy on the ice rink, who calls to Elksa, 'My father said she's a Polish wench.' Madlyn's true place of origin is never fully established. The *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* notes that she is a 'Pole or, as Elske says, a woman from somewhere in Russia or from the Polish border.'¹³⁵ Harlan juxtaposes images of Elksa and Madlyn, building the character portraits of the two women. These portrayals show that the film is not merely based around the battle of two women over one man, but it is a battle of the races; Aryan versus Slav, rural versus city, German versus foreign, moral versus immoral. Reports of the film confirm these themes. *Film-Kurier*, of 16 November 1939, stated that, 'Every conflict of two women fighting over one man is an eternal one – just as eternal as the problem of the Nordic light of the blonde Elksa against the dark, sensuous and carnal nature of the Slavic woman.'¹³⁶ *Filmwelt* emphasised the contrast between the two characters highlighted by Harlan in the film, reporting:

Filming Women in the Third Reich

Kristina Söderbaum gave a deeply distressing and compelling performance, in her wonderful simplicity and trustfulness. Anna Dammann was the dangerous woman . . . , a sly vamp, who, in her unrestrained passion, hunted down . . . the fisherman.¹³⁷

Blame for the affair is placed squarely on the Slavic woman. The press release for the film stated that the conflict between Endrik and Elske occurred ‘because another woman breaks into the marriage’.¹³⁸ Madlyn becomes the focus for hatred in the film as ‘a beautiful foreigner’¹³⁹ and indeed, ‘a demonic woman’.¹⁴⁰

Elske’s despair in the face of such opposition is obvious from the first scenes. Her determination to continue with her everyday life gives the community cause for concern:

Woman: We all saw how much you were worrying last summer . . . when did your husband get in last night? [Elska doesn’t know] Four in the morning! You stay here and bake cakes and wait for her to go away again!

Elske’s unhappiness is exacerbated when she receives a visit from Madlyn. In this scene, the contrast between the two women is expressed in their clothing. Elske is dressed in simple work clothes and ironing, whilst Madlyn is adorned in expensive furs:

Madlyn: You’re making Endrik unhappy!
Elske: You’re outspoken!
Madlyn: I love Endrick!
Elske: I know.
Madlyn: How?
Elske: The whole village knows it!
Madlyn: Your husband doesn’t love you anymore. He wants to get out of here.
Elske: He belongs to the mother of his child and not to a, a . . .
Madlyn: Set him free! You hate me. Perhaps you have to hate me. I’m never going to give Endrik up. Never! I’ll make any sacrifice to keep him.

Despite Elske’s portrait as a loving and supportive wife, this confrontation illustrates her self-sacrifice for the happiness of her husband. Prompted by Madlyn’s assertions, Elske seeks the opinion of the local schoolmaster regarding the procedure for divorce. In the ensuing conversation, the schoolmaster reminds her of their joint responsibility as parents, stressing the need for a unified familial unit:

The Negative Image of Women

Schoolmaster: Ha ! The Civil Code . . . Divorce! Do you want a Cognac?

Elske: No.

Schoolmaster: Here! Clause 7. Marriage dissolved. Through death or judicial verdict. [A boy enters the office. He has been sent there for lying. He is instructed to write 'I must not lie' 50 times.] That's what happens to a child without a father. He runs wild. Ha! Infidelity. A reason for divorce is infidelity. 'The infidelity must be proven.'

The schoolmaster goes on to reassure Elske that blame should be placed on Madlyn, telling her, 'You haven't done evil nor has Endrik.' This is emphasised later in the film when Endrik saves a young boy drowning in a lake, prompting a townswoman to comment, 'I said he wasn't a bad person. Just a bad husband. There's a big difference.' On Jons' birthday, Elske puts the schoolmaster's advice into action, telling Endrick that 'all that's past is buried'. Her forgiving nature is contrasted with Madlyn, who continually pressurises Endrik to leave his wife and child. The affair continues and the stress on Elske is now visibly expressed, especially when Jons, their son, comments on the affair, telling Elske that he has seen Endrik and Madlyn together on his father's fishing boat:

Elske: Daddy must work so Jons can eat, like all good daddies. [Crying]

Jons: Are you crying, Mummy? [She runs from the room, followed by Endrik]

Elske: Have you been deceiving me? [He does not reply] Then I get the child.

Endrik: Why?

Elske: If we are divorced, then I get the child.

Endrik: Do you want a divorce?

Elske: Do **you** want a divorce? Do you intend to tell her to leave? You want to live without Jons because of this person?

Endrik: She's not just a person!

Elske: You are evil, Endrik!

The stress on Elske is becoming increasingly apparent and their marriage is tested when Elske's father decides to exact his own rustic punishment on Madlyn. Once again, the theme of punishment in rural communities is dealt with by Harlan. Elske's father emphasises the theme of familial honour in punishing Madlyn, who cannot understand her crime to the community. Her lack of comprehension further highlights her distance from the rural community and her role as a foreign alien:

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- Hotel Manager: The father of Frau Settegast is here to see you. [Madlyn vainly adjusts her hat and coat]
- Father: I am here to ask you to leave. You are taking my daughter's honour, when you yourself have learnt to live without honour. [He beats her with a horse-whip. Endrik arrives to find the battered Madlyn being escorted from the Hotel]
- Manager: [To Endrik] Do you think that I'd put up with people like her in my guest house?

This is seen to be a just punishment for the mistress, although, conforming to her portrayal as a gentle and innocent housewife, Elske condemns the action and scorns her father for his violence, stating, 'You know that what you did was madness.' The manipulative Madlyn accuses Elske of inciting the action, telling Endrik, 'Your gentle house woman, this Madonna, has such a hatred for me . . . I'll kill her. You pay her back for what she did to me.' Endrik returns home to confront Elske over the incident:

- Elske: Do you hate me?
- Endrik: Yes.
- Elske: Then we must leave each other. I only want one thing from you, only Jons. I'll live with my father.
- Endrik: No.
- Elske: I'd rather jump into the water with Jons, then let her be his mother. You have become evil, Endrick.

Elske's last words give Endrick the idea of murdering her. That night he experiences a dream in which he drowns Elske. She screams, 'Endrick! Kill me! Then your torture will be at an end! Help me!'¹⁴¹ Madlyn and Endrick plot to kill Elske in this way and Endrick takes Elske on a journey over the dangerous waters to Tilsit, in order to sell their horse, a symbol of their marriage. Despite her character combining 'naive innocence and the unmistakable instinct of a loving wife',¹⁴² Elske knows the purpose of her trip and she clings to her son, saying her final goodbye. She reassures her father, 'There's no point getting depressed. Everything comes to an end sooner or later.' Elske is to become a martyr for the love of her husband, fighting for her marriage until the last moment 'like a lioness'.¹⁴³ Her sacrifice is to be for the happiness of her husband and she is willing to give up her own life, even though he is not worthy of such a sacrifice. Madlyn's protestations that she would give up anything for Endrik are paled by Elske's actions and her willing acceptance of her death, terminating her own individual existence for the happiness of the familial unit. Elske's bravery is demonstrated in the boat scene, where she confronts Endrik about his sinister plot, urging him to complete his task swiftly:

The Negative Image of Women

- Elske: You're going around that corner where people drown every year.
Endrick: Scream! Go on scream! Scream that your husband is a murderer!
Elske: You're worse off than I am. If you can't see a way out of your confusion. One of us is in the way. Madlyn or I.
Endrick: And this is the end of the journey. Why don't you scream? Do you want to die?
Elske: If you want me to, Endrick.

Her self-sacrifice and strength in the face of death demonstrates her loyalty to her husband and a noble Nordic bravery in the acceptance of her fate. Individual existence becomes subservient to a higher nobility and Endrick realises the true meaning of fidelity and love. They become close again on the trip to Tilsit and Endrick regrets his affair with the Pole, telling Elske, 'I am so ashamed.' She immediately forgives him and suggests that they return home, to begin a new life together. Endrick does not escape all punishment. Their journey home is a hazardous one and the boat capsizes in a storm, throwing Elske from the boat. Endrick returns home, guilt ridden and declaring to the community, 'I murdered her because of Madlyn Sapierska!' Endrick has to endure fretful hours, waiting to hear of Elske's fate. Symbolically, Elske is brought from the waters by the horse, the wedding gift from her father. She survives the accident and is kept warm by Madlyn, who discovers her washed-up body on the shore. Even in her moment of desperation, Elske rejects Madlyn's help. Madlyn knows that she must leave and disappears. In the final scenes, Endrick is forgiven and the two are reunited over the bed of their sleeping son. The *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* described the concluding scene of the film:

Endrick and Elske find themselves over the little bed of their child again. Endrick now wants to swear an oath to Elske that he will stay true to her for the rest of his entire life. 'Don't say anything. Don't ask anything,' says Elske, 'I know everything.' Elske gives him her hand and the half asleep child says, 'Mummy, put the light out.' Elske puts the light out and in the dark the two people look at each other, Endrick and Elske, and we have the vague sense that . . . a new light surrounds her.¹⁴⁴

According to the Press release for the film, the ending demonstrated to the female audience that 'after five years of marriage, the love of a woman can still be strong enough to overcome all hindrances. For the married couple, Elske and Endrick, the ending of the film is, after a year of marital crisis, a second happy end as it were.'¹⁴⁵

At the end of the film, the family unit is reconstituted through the strength of the wife in the face of considerable adversity. Elske is the embodiment of the rural Aryan wife, forgiving her husband for his infidelity, reconstructing her family

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Figure 20. Concluding scene of *Die Reise nach Tilsit*. BAFA 13615

for the love of her son and her husband, and demonstrating her considerable emotional strength and bravery. She is willing to sacrifice her life for the happiness of her husband and child. She is an instinctive mother, hiding her true unhappiness in order to protect her son. Harlan juxtaposes the character of Elske with that of Madlyn, the Slavic vamp from the city, whose only concern in the film is her own happiness. She pressurises Endrick into abandoning his wife and child, finally inciting him to murder. She is an alien to the farming community, who reject her, and eventually issue her with the rustic punishment of a public beating. In stark contrast to Elske, she is portrayed in a city setting, constantly dressed in expensive and extrovert clothing. At the end of the film, Endrick buys Elske a mink coat, which she treasures as a sign of his love, rather than for the way it makes her look.

Finally, Madlyn has to leave the village in order to remove the temptation from Endrick and allow the marriage to recover unhindered. Elske does not allow Madlyn to help her, rejecting her aid as she lies on the shore. Endrick himself emerges from the affair unscathed, apart from a few hours of worry over Elske's fate. His infidelity and the plot to murder his wife are quickly forgotten by the audience and his wife. This removes all blame from Endrick, a victim of the machinations of the Slavic vamp who seduced him. His admission of his folly and his return to

the familial unit are enough to redeem him and make him worthy of Elske. This image of the adulterer should be in contrast to the image of the adulteress. The adulterer is permitted to return to family life and continue a normal existence, with the mistress escaping, never to return. In the later films of the Reich, from 1943 to 1944, both mistress and adulteress alike are condemned to death for their infidelities.

The theme of adultery in conjunction with the 'happy end' was permitted only in the initial years of the War. 'Realism' played a key role in these formative films. Advertisements issued by Tobis in 1939 stressed that the film

breathes hot blooded life; country people and dramatic events are blended together in one harmonious unity. The tragedy of a young marriage, which is almost broken up through the passionate love of another woman, is formed into an experience, by the strong creative power of Veit Harlan.¹⁴⁶

In these formative years, sensitive issues were portrayed with little effect. As the War dragged on and separations became prolonged, adultery received much less sympathy and the actual screening of films with this theme caused great controversy for the RMVP.

The Adulteress

Romanze im Moll. (Romance in a Minor Key, Helmut Käutner, 1943)

Opfergang (The Sacrifice, Veit Harlan, 1944)

As the War continued, complaints inundated the RFK regarding the portrayal of adultery and especially the inclusion of adulteresses. One film in particular, Helmut Käutner's *Romanze im Moll*, gave particular cause for concern. Set in eighteenth-century France and based on a short story by Guy de Maupassant, *Les Bijoux*, the film told the story of Madeleine, a woman trapped in a loveless marriage with a dull civil servant. She begins to live her unfulfilled dreams through a composer, Michael. Madeleine commences an affair with him and, as a sign of appreciation and love, Michael buys her a pearl necklace, which she treasures. He tells her that she is the inspiration behind his new composition. A colleague of her husband discovers her dark secret and blackmails her. On the final night of her life, Madeleine attends the premiere of Michael's composition, only to discover that the music is sung by a lady who she believes is having an affair with Michael. Distraught she leaves the theatre and commits suicide, poisoning herself. Her husband traces the story of the necklace, before laying the beads across her corpse, accepting his failure and acknowledging her love for another.

The 1942 production was a popular choice in Reich cinemas, making a profit of RM 2,397,000 and becoming the ninth most viewed film of the period from

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Figure 21. Madeleine and Michael, her lover in *Romanze im Moll*. BFI 211428

1 June 1943 to 31 January 1944.¹⁴⁷ It was aimed particularly at the female audience and advertised by Tobis as the story of ‘a woman’s fate; the old and eternal story of a woman who has married a man whom she did not love’.¹⁴⁸ Despite gaining sympathy for her unhappy existence, Madeleine, played by Marianne Hoppe,¹⁴⁹ is transformed into the guilty party, as illustrated by the information on the film released by Tobis:

The film *Romanze im Moll* tells a story of love. A pearl necklace, which her husband had previously mistook as a fake . . . reveals her double existence. Madeleine had married a man whom she did not love. She owed him a mutual respect and thankfulness . . . on the other hand, she did not swear to him her individual happiness. The innocent becomes the guilty. This is the central point of the discussion and is . . . the dramatic element. The heart is victorious and she finds harmony in the arms of another.¹⁵⁰

Käutner’s portrayal of the adulteress was sympathetic. Madeleine’s husband is shown to be a dull man, who is oblivious to both his wife’s unhappiness and her subsequent actions. He is shown to share none of her interests, nor her passion for life. Consequently she is forced into the arms of another, a composer and artist,

who excites her. He shares her love for music and introduces her into a society she could only dream of when in the company of her husband. In her desperation, she is forced into suicide when she believes her affair with Michael to be over. Rather than return to a loveless marriage, she chooses death, leaving behind a distraught and broken husband and a mourning lover. Whilst her death could be interpreted as a message to a wartime female audience regarding the consequences of infidelity, Madeleine is afforded a sympathetic portrayal and a peaceful, but, unhappy death.

Goebbels himself despised this sympathetic portrayal, as Heinrich Fraenkel reported in *Of Fine Films that were Banned*: 'Goebbels regarded the film, coming as it did at the start of his all out effort to win the war, as defeatist . . . Goebbels hated *Romanze im Moll* because of its underlying tenderness.'¹⁵¹ His dissatisfaction with the film is perhaps reflected in his off-hand diary entry of 10 January 1943, in which he commented, 'Helmut Käutner showed me a new film, *Romanze im Moll*. An extraordinarily effective avant-garde work.'¹⁵² However, a more conclusive reaction can be gleaned from the complaints which inundated Tießler at the RFK. A report reached him on 29 July 1943 regarding a review of the film, which had appeared in *Das Schwarze Korps* that same month. George Eckstein, a Lance Corporal in the army, wrote:

During my leave, I saw the film *Romanze im Moll* with my wife. Prior to this, I saw another film of the same genre. [My wife] showed a deep understanding for this unhappy woman, who was already married and who . . . discovered her love for another. The husband is not at home for months or years and is only a visitor, so to speak. The active love of a woman knows no sacrifice. Would it not be possible to create a film in which the woman is victorious over herself, whilst maintaining the necessary strength? In this time of greatness, why must woman be shown for her weakness?¹⁵³

Eckstein's wife's demonstration of sympathy for the tortured Madeleine caused the Lance Corporal some distress as to her morals. His last suggestion to the RMVP looked toward guiding the female audience with more moral portrayals of women, overcoming temptation in order to stay faithful to their menfolk. The constant discussion of how to approach moral issues in wartime fell to Tießler, who seemed to take an active interest, as has been demonstrated previously, in women's roles in film. The complaints eventually led to an emotional outburst by Tießler, who wrote to Kurt Frowein, Goebbels' personal assistant, on 17 January, justifying his position within the RFK. Commenting that the production of *Romanze im Moll* was 'not cheap,' he wrote:

Later, it will be interesting to establish, when we . . . have more time, how many film proposals of a similar sort have died at my desk or have been thrown into my waste paper basket. In the film industry, they are already saying that I am as pious as the film

censor for the Pope and as moralistic as a moral reform group for young women. They should be convinced that this in no way disturbs me, because I feel so tied up with the war concerns of the broader masses, that I interpret every carelessness in the area of the moral supervision of films as a serious sin against the war resilience of our people.¹⁵⁴

So great was the pressure on Tießler over this issue that, on 19 January 1944, Frowein informed the RPL that 'in the fifth year of war, no film in which a discussion of marriage takes place or where adultery is represented can be approved'.¹⁵⁵ This was especially enforced in the policy of front-line screenings. This ruling seemed to have been infringed upon just one year later with the release of Harlan's 1944 production, *Opfergang*, based on a novel by Rudolf Binding.¹⁵⁶

A young couple, Albrecht and Octavia Froben begin a new life together in the Rhineland. But Octavia's homesickness brings the couple back to their original home in Hamburg. There, Albrecht discovers that his childhood sweetheart, Aels, is still residing in her old home. Albrecht becomes infatuated by the natural beauty and eroticism of the young woman. Octavia discovers that Aels' child is living apart from his mother in an area of the city where an epidemic is raging. Octavia encourages Albrecht to rescue the child. In the process, Albrecht becomes infected and is confined to his bed. In fever-induced hallucinations, Albrecht fantasises about Aels. Octavia realises the extent of her husband's affections and when she learns that Aels is dying, she mimics her husband. Riding up to the gate every day, dressed in her husband's clothing, Octavia waves to the bed-ridden Aels, who believes that Albrecht's love for her is still strong. Aels realises the deception and writes to Albrecht, informing him of his wife's sacrifices. At this moment, Albrecht separates from his mistress in his own mind. Aels dies and the married couple honour her memory by casting a rose into the sea; a symbol of her love for nature and of their consignment of the affair to the past. The couple are now free to continue their marriage.

The actual incidence of adultery in the 1944 production is not in fact visible and overt sexual encounters are avoided. The relationship between Aels and Albrecht is portrayed as a spiritual, and not a physical, liaison borne of Albrecht's dissatisfaction and boredom with his marriage and his flirtation with the past. Aels is represented as a siren as opposed to Octavia who takes on the characteristics of 'a lifeless, humourless goose'.¹⁵⁷ Despite Octavia's lack of sexual appeal and want of adventurousness and spontaneity, she is eventually presented as a desirable partner for Albrecht, because of her good heart, forgiving nature, reliability, her devotion to her husband and her selflessness. The wife is presented as the virtuous character, who is eventually victorious and the mistress, the dangerous siren, who loses her life at the end of the film. Once again, blame for the affair is placed on the mistress, with the *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* reporting that 'something always

pushed him back to the natural, tempestuous stranger'.¹⁵⁸ These images are verified by the colour schemes in the film. In *Mutterschaft mit Zuckerguß? Frauenfeindliche Propaganda im NS Spielfilm*, Dora Traudisch provides a scene-by-scene breakdown of the colour worn by the female protagonists in the film. Octavia is shown predominantly in blue and gold, denoting virtue, chastity and holiness, whilst Aels is dressed predominantly in red, a symbol of danger and sexuality.¹⁵⁹

This is in accordance with the desired portrayal of the mistress. Söderbaum recalls that Goebbels perceived the character of Aels as having dark hair, like Madlyn in *Die Reise nach Tilsit*, and refused the blonde actress the role at first, suggesting that Margot Hielscher take the part. Söderbaum states that, 'Goebbels did not want me to play the role of Joy¹⁶⁰ [Aels] in the film *Opfergang* under any circumstances. He saw this woman as a temptress and as such she had to have dark hair.'¹⁶¹ This is confirmed by Harlan in his memoirs, who commented that Goebbels, 'was incensed that we should portray a woman who had a French name [Joie] using an actress with blonde hair'.¹⁶²

The nature of Aels' role as a temptress was associated with the elements, nature and sexuality in the 1944 production. Söderbaum remembers that Harlan 'wanted no sex, but natural eroticism'.¹⁶³ In one scene, Aels is shown riding into the water upon a horse. She is at one with nature and linked to the wild, untameable elements of the sea. Sea and water become her symbols for the film, indicative of her unharnessed sexuality. When shown this scene for an interview with the BBC in 1992, Söderbaum confirmed that 'Goebbels said I was not sexy but that I was erotic.'¹⁶⁴ Octavia recognises that her husband had a natural connection with Aels through the elements stating, 'The wind and the waves are your elements. She too is in the wind and the waves.'

When Albrecht becomes ill with cholera, Octavia demonstrates her selfless character by dressing in her husband's clothes and waving to the bed-ridden Aels, who has also contracted the disease. It was Octavia who initiated moves to rescue Aels' child from the infected area of town and now in her second act of kindness to his husband's mistress, she visits Aels every day in the guise of her husband so that Aels does not worry for his health. In Binding's novel, Albrecht dies. This however was not a satisfactory conclusion to the 1944 film, considering the complaints they had received just one year earlier.

In the film, Albrecht survives and Aels dies. As a final tribute to her memory, Albrecht and Octavia ride into the sea and cast a pink rose into the water. The flower is washed out to sea, reunited in death with the elements. With Aels removed, and Albrecht aware of Octavia's kindness and sacrifice, the couple are free to continue their marriage. *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* noted that 'having recovered, Albrecht belongs totally to Octavia, who he loves with a superhuman love'.¹⁶⁵ Albrecht now realises the true worth of his wife. They kiss, join hands, and ride away from the shore to begin their new life.

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Figure 22. Albrecht and Octavia. BFI

This ending was dictated once again to Harlan by Goebbels. Harlan recalls the Minister's reasoning:

I had hoped to begin the filming of my two films, but I became, once again, the victim of deception. Having given his authorisation that Kristina could play the role of Joy, Goebbels issued a new veto. According to him, he had read the script and opposed the production of *Opfergang* in its original form. He explained to me that, for reasons of

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‘general education’, it was out of the question to depict an adulterous relationship with the same benevolence as in Binding’s novel. He remarked that my films benefited a large audience, especially the soldiers at the front and it would no doubt demoralise [the troops] to see Kristina in such a role . . . Goebbels told us that many soldiers had deserted because they thought that they were being deceived by their wives. If one produced a film glorifying such things as adultery, one risked turning this belief into a general psychological situation. I had to film [an ending where] the woman guilty of adultery had to die and not the husband. The institution of marriage had to be respected at all costs. This was preferable, stated Goebbels, not only for the soldiers at the front but also for home front ‘education’.¹⁶⁶

Goebbels reiterated Frowein’s and Tießler’s concerns of 1943, and ordered Harlan to restructure the film’s conclusion with the adulteress dying and the adulterer escaping, as in *Die Reise nach Tilsit*, without punishment. Despite Goebbels’ concern that the front-line troops would be distressed at the image of Aels, on 2 July 1943, *Signaal*, a popular front-line magazine, distributed a full colour poster of Söderbaum as Aels, advertising the Harlan film as an ‘artistic monument’.¹⁶⁷

When Goebbels viewed the finished product, he was still dissatisfied with the portrayal of Aels in the film, screaming, ‘What have you done with the character of this adulterous woman? You have turned her into a myth! You present her at the end on the beach, like a withered rose that the soft waves of the sea will kindly carry away.’¹⁶⁸ Goebbels’ dissatisfaction with Harlan in 1943 is recorded in his diary entry of 24 July, in which he wrote,

In the evening, I showed the gentlemen [Professor Hell and Professor Sepp Hiltz] the new Harlan film, *Opfergang*, which is filmed in unusually good colour. Unfortunately, in the content of this film, Harlan is prone to exaggeration, as with *Immensee*. Harlan works with mysterious choirs too much and his dialogue is also too obvious and sentimental. I must take Harlan to task. At the moment, he is proceeding along a road which does not promise much success. He must be led back to basics.¹⁶⁹

On 3 January 1943, Goebbels praised the quality of the colour,¹⁷⁰ but his criticism of Harlan’s sentimentality and subject matter outweighed the little praise he offered. Goebbels was not alone in his interpretation of the film. A report sent to Goebbels from the RFI noted the reaction of the foreign press to the 1944 production, stating:

The artistic judgements of the film are very contradictory. The criticisms of the Swedish press can be gleaned if one looks at the ironic undertone of the reports. Swedish literary criticism takes the opposite view to the Swiss. Criticism is made of the, ‘lack of reality’ in the theme of this cinematic love triangle and the, ‘exuberance of sentimentality’. In

the foreground of the Swedish interest is the Swede Kristina Söderbaum, who has won the hearts of the public. Swiss criticisms are the exact opposite throughout and are very unfriendly. Perhaps due to resentment . . . The film is repeatedly blamed for its luxurious atmosphere, which presents the masquerade scene as, 'the carnival orgy of the Rhineland,' and the accompanying angelic choirs and stringed orchestra as, 'acoustic narcotics.' Also Harlan, once the robust heavy weight of the film world is caught in the literary crossfire, as producer and author of the piece.¹⁷¹

The *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* drew on the film's sentimentality, reporting that 'the story is pathetic, touching but totally unrealistic . . . last but not least, Harlan plays his greatest trump card, Kristina Söderbaum. She does not betray him, warm blooded and intense.'¹⁷² This report confirms that the image of the adulterous woman, through Söderbaum, was transformed into a myth. The public reacted to the figure of Aels and rejected Octavia, the intended role model. The report also draws upon a key benefit of the film. In its opulence and rich colour, the film was a model of escapism for the war-battered population of the Reich in 1943. The Swiss newspaper, *Tagesanzeiger*, noted the paradox between the film and its country of origin, stating, 'A cloud of richness and luxury spreads itself over this film . . . a glaring contrast . . . between today's war torn Germany and peacetime Germany, which is portrayed in this film.'¹⁷³ Söderbaum wished to take her 'escapist image' to her home in Sweden to alleviate the difficulties of war, on a tour promoting *Opfergang* to Malmö, Göteborg and Stockholm in August 1944.¹⁷⁴ Söderbaum herself became subject to wartime restrictions when the Minister prevented her from taking her sons with her, keeping them behind in the Reich.¹⁷⁵

Despite criticisms, the film received a 'record success' in Söderbaum's homeland and in Switzerland, where 'in Zurich in only 24 days of screening, more than 50,000 viewers have been counted . . . more than the American films, *How Green was my Valley* and *Mrs Miniver*.'¹⁷⁶ In Germany itself, it became the most popular film for the period 1 June to 30 November 1944.¹⁷⁷ Ufa predicted an estimated RM 6,007,000 profit from box office receipts.¹⁷⁸ The cost of the production, initially estimated at RM 1,927,581.54,¹⁷⁹ was eventually made for RM 2,237,000.¹⁸⁰ Kristina Söderbaum received RM 70,000¹⁸¹ for her role as Aels.

Conclusions

From an analysis of all three films certain characteristics emerge. Firstly, the mistress is often portrayed as a dark, foreign woman, who represents danger for the familial unit. She is outspoken and rebellious, often originating from a city background. She is a passionate character, who though her seductive and sexual nature traps the male, forcing him to respond to his natural instinct and commence an affair. The mistress is punished for her crime; Madlyn is publicly beaten, whilst

Aels loses her life. At the end of the film, the mistress is forced to disappear, as in *Die Reise nach Tilsit*, or, as the War becomes more intense, die, as in *Opfergang*. In contrast to this image of the dangerous and ultimately unfulfilling woman, the wife is characterised as a reliable companion, who is forgiving of her husband's weakness. She is homeloving, maternal, subservient and supportive, even in the most extreme circumstances. She sacrifices everything for the love of her husband and the maintenance of the familial unit. In all three cases, the male protagonists escape punishment. The main theme of the films *Die Reise nach Tilsit* and *Opfergang* is the reconstruction of the family unit and the elimination of the disruptive element: the mistress.

These images gave the male population cause for complaint, as has been illustrated by the letters to Tießler and Frowein's decision to ban the subject of marital relations in film. Nevertheless, with women making up the majority of the home-front audience, the subject made for compelling viewing. Of the four biggest grossing films in 1944, two told the story of adulterous relationships (*Opfergang* and *Romanze im Moll*) and one told the story of the fidelity of a young girl to her husband, even after his death (*Immensee*). The theme of marital relations seemed to be a popular, if controversial, choice for the women audiences of the home front.

Conclusions

The negative image of women in the films of the Third Reich centred around sacrifice. The image of male sacrifice in films under National Socialism was quite different. Men were seen to die for worldly principles, in pursuit of honour for the party, the Führer or for Germany. Female sacrifice for the community is individualistic and based upon the feminine role as a sexual creature. In the films analysed in this chapter, women die as a result of their involvement in adulterous relationships, both as the adulteress (Madeleine in *Romanze im Moll*) and as the mistress (Aels in *Opfergang*) or as a result of their involvement as racial polluters (Dorothea in *Jud Süß*, Anuschka in *Die goldene Stadt* or Mette in *Dorf im Roten Sturm*.) Through the death of such negative women, the community is not affected, with all undesirable elements eliminated. These characters were held up as examples for the women of the Reich. Under National Socialism, women were expected to live as the 'priest of the family' and upholder of the Aryan race. The films demonstrated that women were to be punished if they attempted to break out of these designated roles. Punishment was severe. The death of the 'fallen woman' manifested itself in two forms. Firstly, death is a selfless act, in which the woman will take her own life and have no further impact on the community. Secondly, her death is a lonely one, with the female protagonist in pain or solitude. The identification of the crime as one based on sexual morality in the films of the Third Reich is

important. It defines women's position in the eyes of the image maker, the ideologists and propagandists of Nazism. The 'fallen woman' is portrayed as a sexual creature, controlled by emotion and displaying a considerable lack of political and racial judgement. The negative image of woman was often juxtaposed with a positive image in order to clearly label the desired role model. These images, produced at a time when women made up the majority of the home-front audience, were not without significance. They demonstrated to women living under the auspices of the Reich the type of women they should, and indeed, should not become.

Notes

- 1 Belling, C., *Der Film in Staat und Partei*. (Der Film Verlag, Berlin, 1936), p. 12.
- 2 IWMD. Goebbels Diaries. Fragments. EDS 250. EAP. 21-g-16/5c. AL1904/2. 19 Fragments 425, pp. 8–20, August 1941. 25 May–6 June 1942. Here 28 May 1942, p. 29.
- 3 HOOVER. Hinkel papers. TS Germany H663. Speech for the 1935 Party Day in Nuremberg. *Der Reichstag zu Nürnberg 1935. Schutz des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre durch nationalsozialistische Kulturpolitik*. p. 2.
- 4 Belling, C., *Film und Partei*, *op.cit.*, pp. 12–17.
- 5 NAW T70/14. IB/1200/3/2 Hinkel (RKK) to Flügel (Personnel). 28 June 1937. Document reiterates the Nuremberg Laws and the effect on the RMVP/RKK.
- 6 NAW T70/14. Reich Minister of the Interior. Divorce of Civil Servants. R d Ere.d.RMdI. 28/9/43-IIIa. 950 11/48-6101.
- 7 BDC. Henny Porten. RKK 2600. Box 0158. File 22. Gestapo File for Porten.
- 8 BDC. Henny Porten. RKK 2600. Box 0158. Petition to RMVP. November 1934.
- 9 BDC. Henny Porten . RKK 2600. Box 0158. File 22. Flaskamp to Auer (RKK). 18 January 1935.
- 10 BDC. Henny Porten. RKK 2600. Box 0158. Flaskamp to Goebbels. 4 February 1938.
- 11 BDC. Henny Porten-Kaufmann. RThK RFK BeKA 20306/12/7/40/38. Gestapo report on Porten.
- 12 BDC Henny Porten. RKK 2600. Box 0158. File 22. Hand-written letter to Herman Göring. 21 December 1937.
- 13 BDC. Henny Porten-Kaufmann. RthK RFK BeKA 20306/12/7/40/38. Gestapo report expressing the Minister's verbal agreement.

- 14 BAP R55/662. Hinkel (RFK) to Goebbels. 25 July 1944.
- 15 BDC. Henny Porten. RKK 2667. Box 0024. File 66. Lehmann (Tobis) to RFK. R/c./Kü. 13 March 1940.
- 16 BAP R58/155. SD Report on the coming film programme for 1940/1.
- 17 Feuchtwanger, L., *Jew Süß*. Transl. Muir, E. and W. (Martin Secker, London, 17th Edition, 1929). This text was used by Harlan in his preparation for the film (Harlan, V., *op.cit.*), although there was an earlier version of the text by Wilhelm Hauff (1827).
- 18 *Film-Kurier*. 6 February 1941. Quoted in Wulf, J., *op.cit.*, p. 406.
- 19 *Filmwelt*. 4 October 1940. Quoted in Romani, C., *op.cit.*, p. 92.
- 20 Söderbaum's casting as Dorothea was confirmed on 16 March 1940. Fsch. E1/1443. Ufa / Terra requested her casting on 14 March 1940. Terra to RFK. BDC Kristina Söderbaum film. RKK 2600. Box 0180. File 31.
- 21 BFI. Dr Günther Seuern in 'Jud Süß, die Geißel eines landes', in *Filmwelt*, 2 February 1940. No.5.
- 22 Harlan in *Der Film*, 20 January 1940. Quoted in Wulf, J., *op.cit.*, p. 398.
- 23 Still supplied and reproduced by the BFI (87136).
- 24 Hitler, A., *Mein Kampf* (Pimlico, London, 1992), p. 55.
- 25 Still supplied and reproduced by BFI (86654).
- 26 Elwenspoek, C., *Jew Süß Oppenheimer. The Great Financier, Gallant, and Adventurer of the 18th Century*. (Hurst and Blackwell Ltd, London, 1931), p. 136.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 138.
- 28 Harlan, V., *op.cit.*, p. 141.
- 29 *Ibid.*, pp. 158–9.
- 30 Söderbaum, K., *op.cit.*, pp. 149–50.
- 31 IWMS Unpublished interview with Kristina Söderbaum. 2993/1/2.
- 32 Harlan, V., *op.cit.*, pp. 170–75.
- 33 *Ibid.* p. 171.
- 34 Hunte, Otto, & Vollbrecht, Karl, '... auf daß ihnen viel Leid erspart bleibe! Jud Süß – ein Geschichtlicher Film', in *Filmwelt*. 12 April 1940. No. 15. BFI.
- 35 Leiser, E., *op.cit.*, p. 153.
- 36 IWMS. Unpublished interview with Kristina Söderbaum. 2993/2.
- 37 IWMS Testimonies of the Nuremberg Trials. Trial of Julius Streicher. Reel 4 3231 -/9/10/1/46. Exhibit GB 168.
- 38 Hitler, A., *op.cit.*, p. 38.
- 39 Frobenius, E., *Die Frau im Dritten Reich. Ein Schrift für das deutsche Volk* (Nationaler Verlag, Berlin, 1933.), p. 38.
- 40 Kirkpatrick, C., *Women in Nazi Germany*. (Jarrolds, London, 1939), p. 160.
- 41 *Amtswalter Innenblatt der NS Frauenschaft*. (Munich, Glässler, 1933). No. 23 October 1933, in Kirkpatrick, C., *op.cit.*, p. 163.
- 42 IWMS Trial of Streicher. 3230/8/5/6/7/8 9/1/46.

- 43 Hunte in *Filmwelt*. 12 April 1940. No.15.
- 44 The films in which Söderbaum appeared often ended with her character dying as a result of drowning or submersion. For example in *Die goldene Stadt*. Her characters also had many associations with water. (*Die Reise nach Tilsit*, *Opfergang* and *Immensee*.) These associations are discussed in detail throughout the course of the thesis. The phrase, although well known, in this instance, is from Hillenbrand, F.K.M., *Underground Humour in Nazi Germany, 1933 – 1945*. (Routledge, London, 1995), p. 111.
- 45 BDC Kristina Söderbaum. RKK 2600. Box 0180. File 31. Application form to be included in the Autumn Screen Tests of 1935.
- 46 Söderbaum, K., *op.cit.*, p. 148.
- 47 Seuer, G., *loc.cit.*, *Filmwelt*, 2 February 1940.
- 48 Elwenspoek, C., *op.cit.*, p. 150. Tract printed and in circulation in 1738, the year of Süß's execution.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 241.
- 50 *Ibid.*, p. 251.
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 256.
- 52 *Ibid.*, p. 248
- 53 BAP R58/156. SD Report. 28 November 1940.
- 54 BAP R58/157. SD Report. 20 January 1941.
- 55 BAP R58/156. 28 November 1940.
- 56 IfZ Munich. *Presse-Rundschreiben*. No. II/279/40. Dated 27/4/1940. Quoted in Wulf, J., *op.cit.*, p. 400.
- 57 BAP R55/949. RR. Dr Richter (RMVP) to Goebbels. December 1940. Pers. 1369/16.10.40/13.6.
- 58 BAP R55/665. *Reichsfilmintendant* to Goebbels. 4 October 1944.
- 59 NAW T70/29 Certificate proclaiming Harlan's elevation to the title of Professor. Signed by Goebbels and approved by Hitler. 3 March 1943.
- 60 BAP R55/663. *Reichsfilmintendant* to Goebbels. 15 November 1944.
- 61 BAP R55/664. Letter from Hinkel, RFI, to Goebbels, regarding a conversation with Harlan. 6 December 1944.
- 62 My thanks go to Dr Susan Tegel (University of Hertfordshire) for this information. Dr Tegel to the author. 4 December 1996.
- 63 BAP R55/001285. Ufa planned production records. December 1944.
- 64 Hamburg Staatsarchiv. The papers of Erich Lüth, former press officer to the Hamburg Senate. He was a leading opponent of Harlan and initiated a boycott of his films in the 1950s. Lüth was sued by Harlan in 1950. 622/1/ 27/ 1 vol.3 1/1-15/2/51. I am indebted to Dr Tegel for providing me with the fragments of the script, background information on Lüth and for documentation relating to the film from Harlan's personal file at the Berlin Document Centre.

- 65 Public Record Office (hereafter PRO) PRO FO 1060/1233. Trial of Harlan court transcript.
- 66 Interview with Therese Müller in *Die Reise nach Schweden. Kristina Söderbaum. Porträt ein Schauspielerin*. A film by Hans Christoph Blumenberg. For ZDF/Sat 1993. I am indebted to Dr Susan Tegel for a copy of this film.
- 67 BAP R55/949. Correspondence regarding Harlan's demands between the RMVP, Goebbels, and the *Reichsarbeitsminister*. Here *Reichsarbeitsminister*, Dr Kimmich to Goebbels. 20 November 1940. Marian also demanded a higher fee for the actual film of RM 50,000, doubling his normal fee. (20 February 1940). Marian committed suicide after the War.
- 68 Kracauer, S., *op.cit.*, p. 61.
- 69 BAP NS18/357. Tießler to Goebbels. 27 October 1942.
- 70 BAP NS18/357. Tießler informing Waldman (RPL) of Goebbels' comments on 26 May 1943.
- 71 BAP NS 18/357. Tießler to Goebbels. 27 October 1942.
- 72 Wagner, H., *Taschenwörterbuch des Neuen Staates*. (Quelle und Mener, Leipzig, 1933), p. 26.
- 73 *Ein deutscher Bauer*. (NSDAP, 1935) Wiener Library. Microfilm. 155/J69X. p. 38.
- 74 The concept of the farming community was extended in film. Newsreels often stressed the affinity of the community with nature and racial health. One such newsreel (IWM GWS 188 No. 685) depicts the cropping of tomatoes and vegetables, using the theme to stress the healthy lifestyle of the farmer. Others (IWM GWS 232) accentuated the hereditary nature of the farm, linking racial biology to the Reich Entailed Farm Law. In this film, families are seen to work side by side, three generations toiling the earth, from grandparents to grandchildren.
- 75 *Ein deutsche Bauer*, *op.cit.*, p. 33.
- 76 Bauer, A., *Deutsche Spielfilm Almanach*. (Christoph Winterberg, Munich, 1976), pp. 562–63.
- 77 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier. Die goldene Stadt*. No. 3285. BAFA 5988.
- 78 *Art and Power. Europe under the Dictators*. Exhibition Catalogue (Hayward Gallery, London, 1995), p. 174.
- 79 *Ein deutscher Bauer*, *op.cit.*, p. 1.
- 80 *Der Sächsische Bauer*. 4 February 1934. Quoted in Lovin, C.R., 'Farm Women in the Third Reich', in *Agricultural History*. Vol. 60. No. 3. Summer 1986. pp. 105–23. Here p. 111.
- 81 Kessler, H., *Die Deutscher Frau. Nationalsozialistische Frauenpropaganda im Völkischer Beobachter*. (Pahl Rugenstein, Cologne, 1981.), p. 75.
- 82 Lovin, C.R., *loc.cit.*, p. 109.
- 83 Released by the *Frauenwerk* film department. Quoted in Brady, R.A., *The Spirit*

and Structure of German Fascism. (London, 1937), p. 198.

- 84 Quoted in Browning, H., *Women under Fascism and Communism*. (Martin Lawrence, London, 1934), p. 12.
- 85 Mason, T., 'Women in Germany, 1925–1940', in Caplan, J. (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 196–7. First appeared in Ruskin History Workshops, 1973.
- 86 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier. Die goldene Stadt*. no. 3285. BAFA 5988.
- 87 Hitler, A., *op.cit.*, p. 242.
- 88 Baranowsky, S., 'The Sanctity of Rural Life: Protestantism, Agrarian Politics and Nazism in Pomerania during the Weimar Republic'. *German History* Vol. 9, No. 1 (1991), pp. 1–23, p. 12.
- 89 *Ibid.*, quoting from *Bote von Pommerstrand*, 15/30, 27 July 1924.
- 90 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier. Die goldene Stadt*. No. 3285. BAFA 5988.
- 91 Wiener Library Clippings Collection. PC5 118(c). 9 October 1940.
- 92 Catalogue of Forbidden Films. BFI Archive. p. 43.
- 93 IWMD 93/55/2 Harding. Telegram on Dresdener EG. GSP 176 536/53511 1530 P1150.
- 94 *Leipziger Neuste Nachrichten*. Article 'How to be a Herrenvolk'. Wiener Clippings Collection. P5–118a.
- 95 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series II, Vol. 3), pp. 315.
- 96 *Kärnter Grenzruf* 1 April 1942. Angelika G. IWMD Harding 93/55/2.
- 97 *Ostsee Zeitung, Stettiner General Anzeiger*. 12 April 1942. IWMD Harding 93/55/2.
- 98 Quoted in Wulf, J., *op.cit.*, p. 317.
- 99 BAP NS 18/352. Tießler to Pg. Witt, Film Advertising. 19 February 1942. Ti/H/R/T.
- 100 BAP NS 18/252. Wolf to Hippler. 19 January 1943.
- 101 BAP NS 18/352. Head of the Reich Propaganda Amt Osten to Tießler. Stu/N. No date.
- 102 Harlan, V., *op.cit.*, p. 201.
- 103 *Ibid.*, p. 202.
- 104 *Die Reise nach Schweden. Kristina Söderbaum. Porträt ein Schauspielerin*. A film by Hans Christoph Blumenberg for Zdf/Sat. 1993.
- 105 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series II, Vol. 4), p. 274. 11 May 1942.
- 106 *Ibid.*, pp. 294–5. 15 May 1942.
- 107 Söderbaum, K., *op.cit.*, p. 167.
- 108 Harlan, V., *op.cit.*, p. 151.
- 109 IWMS 2993/2. Interview with Söderbaum. The 'bitty' nature of the text was due to Söderbaum speaking in English.
- 110 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier. Die goldene Stadt*. No. 3285. BAFA 5988.
- 111 *Ibid.*
- 112 BAP R58/990. SD report from SS *Obersturmbannführer*, Dr Spengler. The

report was sent to the *Sicherheitspolizei*, the SD, in the Reich, in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, in Poland, in the Netherlands, in Alsace-Lorraine, in Norway, the leader of the *Einsatzgruppe* III, and the leader of the *Einsatzkommandos* in Paris and Brussels.

- 113 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Berlin, 1 December 1941. Interview with Harlan on *Die goldene Stadt*.
- 114 Himmler in his Bad Tölz speech, November 1937. IfZ, Munich MA 311 BL 818. Quoted in Mosse, G.L., *Nationalism and Sexuality. Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*. (Howards Fertig, New York, 1985), p. 169.
- 115 *Ibid.*
- 116 *Das Schwarze Korps*. 22 May 1935. Quoted in Bleuel, H., *Strength through Joy. Sex and Society in Nazi Germany*. (Secker & Warburg, London, 1973), p. 288.
- 117 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series II vol. 5), p. 180. 24 July 1942.
- 118 *Ibid.*, p. 448. 4 September 1942.
- 119 *Ibid.*, p. 608. 30 September 1942.
- 120 BAK R 109 I/6 3. *Sitzung der Firmen Produktionschefs*. 30 April 1942. Point II.
- 121 German European Service. 10 April 1944. 19:30. IWMD Harding 93/55/2.
- 122 Sander, A.U., *op.cit.*, Tables. *Dorf im Roten Sturm* received 20 positive responses.
- 123 BAP R 58/193. SD Report. 3 April 1944.
- 124 Strasser in *Nationalsozialistische Briefe*. Vol. 18. 15 March 1930. p. 307. Quoted in Wittrock, C., 'Das Frauenbild im Nationalsozialismus' in *Weiblichkeits Mythen*. (Sandler, Frankfurt a/Main, 1983), p. 216.
- 125 IWMD. Harding 93/55/2. German Home Service Broadcast. 'Topics of the Day'. Königsberg. 07:10, 28 April 1944. M.I.I.O.
- 126 BAP NS 18/352 Tießler to Goebbels. Ti/Hu 28 September 1942.
- 127 *Ibid.*
- 128 Lida Baarova signed to Ufa in 1935, with her first major film part being *Baracole*. She met Goebbels on the set of the Wegener film, *Stunde der Versuchung*, and they were later to be neighbours at Schwanenwerder, where Goebbels had his summer house and she lived with the actor, Gustav Fröhlich. The affair developed from here leading to various outspoken, but unconfirmed incidents. It was claimed that Fröhlich had dragged the unsuspecting Minister from his car and hit him. Goebbels took Baarova to state functions and even to tea with his wife Magda. She supported her husband's infidelities but felt threatened by Goebbels' love for Baarova, petitioning Hitler for divorce in 1938. Goebbels was so serious in his love for Baarova that he offered his resignation as Propaganda Minister and wanted the position of Ambassador

to Japan. Hitler refused, ordering Goebbels and Magda to stay together for a year. If after the year, Goebbels was still compelled to follow Baarova, Hitler would permit a divorce. Baarova was expelled from Reich territories, despite her protestations that she left of her own accord. Goebbels and his wife stayed together until their joint suicide in May 1945.

- 129 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series I, Vol.3), p. 606. 11 October 1939.
- 130 Söderbaum's appearance as Elske was confirmed on 6 February 1939. BDC Kristina Söderbaum RKK 2600. Box 0180. File 31.
- 131 Harlan, V., *op.cit.*, pp. 99–100.
- 132 Söderbaum, K., *op.cit.*, p. 114.
- 133 *Ibid.* p. 115.
- 134 PRO FO 1023/182, Ref: SG (51) 158.
- 135 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier. Die Reise nach Tilsit.* No. 2971. BAFA 13615.
- 136 *Film-Kurier.* Bonn. 16 November 1939. BAFA 13615.
- 137 *Filmwelt.* No. 48. 1 December 1939. BFI.
- 138 *Die Reise nach Tilsit. Presseheft Tobis.* BAFA 13615.
- 139 *Die Reise nach Tilsit. Werbedienst Tobis.* BAFA 13615.
- 140 *Das Film Blatt.* November 1939. BAFA 13615.
- 141 According to Söderbaum, these scenes were filmed when she had pyelitis and a temperature of 38.5 degrees. He still ordered her to act in the water. She commented, 'I went into the water, as Veit had wanted. I knew exactly what I was risking.' Söderbaum, *op.cit.*, pp. 112–13.
- 142 *Film-Kurier.* Bonn, 16 November 1939. BAFA 13615.
- 143 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier. Die Reise nach Tilsit.* No. 2971. BAFA 13615.
- 144 *Ibid.*
- 145 *Die Reise nach Tilsit. Presseheft. Tobis.* BAFA 13615.
- 146 *Die Reise nach Tilsit. Werbedienst. Tobis.* BAFA 13615.
- 147 BAP R55/63. The film made RM 4,5000,000 in box office receipts and cost RM 1,343,000 to produce, leaving a clear profit of RM 2,397,000. Ufa Box Office Receipts for 1 June 1943 to 31 January 1944.
- 148 *Romanze im Moll.* Advertising information. BAFA 13986.
- 149 Marianne Hoppe received RM 50,000 for this role. BDC Marianne Hoppe. RKK 2667. Box 13. File 60. Alberti confirms the payment in RFK Alb/ Sch. On 30 July 1942.
- 150 *Romanze im Moll. Bild und Text Information. Tobis.* BAFA 13986.
- 151 Fraenkel, H., *Of Fine Films that were Banned.* (1957) Original Transcript. BFI. p. 161.
- 152 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series II, Vol. 7), p. 90. 10 January 1943.
- 153 BAP NS 18/ 362 (b). Report to Tießler. 29 July 1943.
- 154 BAP NS 18/362 (b). Tießler to Frowein. Berlin. 17 January 1944.
- 155 BAP NS 18/362 (b). Frowein to RPL, Kurt Schmidt. H/Ri. 19 January 1943.

- 156 Binding, R., *Der Opfergang. Eine Novelle*. (Insel Verlag, Leipzig, 1936).
- 157 *Evangelische Beobachter*. Review of *Opfergang* after its post-war release. 19 September 1952. Report no. 515. p. 335.
- 158 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*. No. 3325. BAFA 12480.
- 159 Traudisch, D., *op.cit.*, p. 163.
- 160 Joy was the name of Aels in Binding's original.
- 161 Söderbaum, K., *op.cit.*, p. 180.
- 162 Harlan, V., *op.cit.*, p. 218.
- 163 Söderbaum, K., *op.cit.*, pp. 180–1.
- 164 Söderbaum in an interview for the BBC programme *We Have Ways of Making you Think. Goebbels – Master of Propaganda*. 1992.
- 165 *Illustrierte Film-Kurier*. No. 3325. BAFA 12480.
- 166 Harlan, V., *op.cit.*, pp. 221–22.
- 167 *Signaal*. Dutch Edition. 2 July 1943.
- 168 Harlan, V., *op.cit.*, p. 229.
- 169 Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *op.cit.*, (Series II, Vol. 7), p. 156. 24 July 1943.
- 170 *Ibid.*, p. 41. 3 January 1943.
- 171 BAK R 109II/15 Fol.1. RFI to Goebbels. 13 January 1945.
- 172 *Ibid.* Press reports to the Minister.
- 173 *Ibid.*
- 174 BAP R55/665. Hinkel to Goebbels. 2 August 1944.
- 175 BAP R55/665. Dr Heinrichsdorff (Goebbels' assistant) to Hinkel. 5 August 1944.
- 176 BAK R109 II/15 Fol.1. RFI to Goebbels. 13 January 1945.
- 177 BAK R109 II/15 Fol.1. Box Office Receipts 1 June to 30 November 1944.
- 178 *Ibid.*
- 179 BAK R109II/47. Film Costings for *Opfergang*.
- 180 BAK R109II/15 Fol.1. Ufa Budget Sheet.
- 181 BAP R56VI/33. Casting and payments for *Opfergang*.

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Conclusion

Historiographic debate surrounding the role of women in the Third Reich focuses on whether the issues raised as a result of German Nazism have gender implications. The discussion is centred on two key areas. The debate questions the relationship of women to Nazism and presents them as either ‘victims’ or ‘perpetrators’, leading to presumptions of ‘guilt’ and ‘complicity’. Some historians have found it difficult to reconcile the ‘feminine nature’ with the inhumanity of the Nazi regime. Research had to be conducted in order to ascertain whether women were active in traditional spheres of influence during the Third Reich with men occupying the ‘public’ sphere of politics and business and women confined to the ‘private’ sphere of the home and family or indeed whether such spheres even existed within the Third Reich at all.

Adelheid von Saldern has recently challenged traditional perceptions of women’s experience of Nazism, arguing that women had been simplistically categorised by historians.¹ The title of von Saldern’s article ‘Victims or Perpetrators?’ is not without significance. This division of German women attempted to clarify whether women were compliant with Nazism or whether they were victims of a patriarchal regime merely imposing policies ultimately detrimental to the condition of women, creating a new group of ‘victims’ within the Reich.

Contending that the policies and practice of Nazism were gender specific, Gisela Bock argued that post-war analyses of the social structures of Nazism demonstrated that racial and gender policies were inextricably linked. She claimed that all women, by their nature, were victims of the Nazi State. Arguing that traditional perceptions of the Nazi regime as pro-natal were misguided, Bock noted that ‘the National Socialist *Rassenkampf* in its most extreme form was defined as a deadly struggle of men not just against men – such as in a traditional military war – but also, and particularly, against women as mothers’.² Drawing on anti-natal racial policies, Bock concluded that Nazism was based upon paternal, rather than maternal, values. She argued that maternal feeling, and the associated virtue of humanity, were not a feature of the Third Reich, stressing that ‘under National Socialism, the values of maternity and maternalism, like human values in general, had reached an historical and international nadir’.³ Von Saldern warned that Bock’s conclusions encouraged perceptions of women as mere ‘victims’ or ‘objects’, creating a theory in which Bock attempted ‘to generalise and extend her conclusions to all women’.⁴ Von Saldern criticised Bock’s general approach to the question of female ‘guilt’

and advocated concentration on the individual, stating that 'Bock's interpretation of Nazi policy leads to the conclusion that all women were potential victims with the result that is all too easy to argue that the number of women who shared direct responsibility for the Third Reich was negligible and that their involvement with the Nazi dictatorship was only a secondary phenomenon, purely a process of accommodation.'⁵

In contrast to Bock's theories regarding women as victims, Claudia Koonz's central thesis argued that women were all accomplices to a predominantly patriarchal regime. The maintenance of 'normal' family life within the private sphere of the Third Reich, argued Koonz, made women accessories to events which took place within it, providing a safe haven and stable home environment for the main perpetrators of racial and dictatorial crimes.⁶ Rather than women being perceived as 'victims' of the Third Reich, Koonz argued that 'far from remaining untouched by Nazi evil, women operated at its very centre'.⁷ Koonz's theory that women were equally responsible for the Third Reich raised questions of female 'guilt' and 'complicity'. Some historians have questioned the division of such issues along gender lines. Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Ipperman asserted that 'like men, women were simultaneously victims of and participants in National Socialism, with some of the latter equally the cruelty of their male colleagues'.⁸

Gender-specific assumptions on Nazi policy led the interpretation of the experience of women to be artificially 'polarized', with research primarily concentrating on 'pure types', notably women as 'victims' or 'perpetrators'. These stereotypes were dependent on the existence of traditional spheres of influence. Koonz's argument, that women were accomplices to Nazism by maintaining a stable home environment, is reliant on women remaining in the private or familial sphere. However, the female experience of the Third Reich, particularly in the war years, demonstrated that not all women were solely active within the home. To assume that women lived in only one social, economic or political arena, argued von Saldern, leads to a distortion of women's role within Nazism:

rather than emphasising the connection between the public and private spheres . . . women's historians insist upon their separation, a division drawn along more or less gendered lines. They argue that women acted primarily in a 'sane', non-political, private arena, an assumption which sometimes leads to a positive evaluation of women's activities in the Third Reich.⁹

The argument based on gendered divisions has, in recent years, been re-evaluated. Research has demonstrated that traditional gender-specific 'spheres of influence' were not in general operation during the Third Reich for a number of reasons. Firstly, according to Koonz's argument, spheres of influence preserved a 'normal' family existence. Within the social structures of the Third Reich, this was hardly

possible. 'Normality' had been forfeited, particularly during the war years, leading to the dissolution of the family unit with husbands, fathers and brothers away at the front and women increasingly expected to work and cope with various hardships. As Jill Stephenson noted, the wartime situation created very different socio-economic circumstances for women: '[A]bove all, during and sometimes also after the war, many women had to assume the role of the breadwinner and head of the household, with a husband or father temporarily absent or never to return.'¹⁰ Stephenson and von Saldern agreed that the Second World War altered traditional expectations of women. War was the decisive factor in changing the female experience of the Third Reich. In summarising von Saldern's objections to the use of spheres of influence in analysis, David Crew stated that 'the great majority of German women granted at least a passive acquiescence to the Nazi regime because it allowed them to conduct a relatively tranquil life until the deaths of husbands, fathers and brothers on the Eastern front and the massively destructive Allied bombing raids destroyed all illusions of normality'.¹¹

Secondly, with the Reich being a highly politicised society, the separation of spheres was not possible. The 'private' sphere was invaded by the 'public' sphere and the two gender-specific areas of influence were merged. Historians are now beginning to analyse the 'blurring' of gender distinctions within the Third Reich. Dagmar Reese and Carola Sachse highlighted this issue in their contribution to the most significant debate to date in *Töchter-fragen: NS-Frauengeschichte*, arguing that the State increasingly encroached upon the traditional female environment of the home, so that it became impossible to speak of separate spheres.¹² Von Saldern also analysed women's reaction to the 'blurring' of gender-specific areas, noting that women's response to the breakdown of traditional social 'norms' may well have been positive: 'Women did not see this infiltration of politics into the private sphere as illegitimate or as a form of subordination. It may rather have been regarded as a termination of a senseless division between two spheres which enhanced women's social status and constructed an apparently productive synthesis between the "public" and the "private".'¹³

Given that traditional structures for analysing the situation of women in the Third Reich has been fundamentally challenged, a new theory emerged primarily from Germany in the 1990s, which advocated the cessation of the search for 'pure types' of women. In assessing current developments in women's historiography of Nazism, von Saldern stressed: '[T]here are strong arguments in favour of abandoning the search for "pure types" . . . so as to focus more attention upon what can be called "mixed types". In every day realities produced by German Fascism ordinary men and women become complex and contradictory combinations of both victims and perpetrators.' Current research demonstrates that women should be seen in individual, rather than in structural, terms in order to illustrate the divergence of female opinion and experience in the Third Reich. Studies such

as those conducted by Alison Owings and Jennifer Gibson and Elizabeth Tobin¹⁴ seek to qualify the female experience in the Third Reich and move away from the sweeping generalisations made in the early stages of the *Historikerinnenstreit* (debate among female historians).

This central historical debate highlighted that it is too simplistic to define the female experience as one of 'complicity' and 'resistance' and to categorise women as either 'victims' or 'perpetrators', with the subsequent implications of 'guilt' or 'innocence'. The research presented in this book demonstrates that not every image adhered to the traditional stereotype. Practical considerations determined the image of women in the feature film industry of the Third Reich. This study shows that even within the controlled environment of the production of propaganda films, no 'pure types' completely dominated the film programme, a reflection of the society it represented, presenting a combination of 'mixed types'. Nazi film, whilst operating within a given ideological framework, provided a wide variety of female images, which did not always correspond to the 'private' or 'feminine' sphere. Equally, women's role within the industry, particularly during the war years, highlighted the fusion of traditional spheres, with an increase in female employment in the RMVP. From 1943 to 1944, some women moved into male dominated areas, such as transport, technology, management and even the military.

This study has argued that the course of the War dramatically altered cinematic female identity in the Reich. Changes in German military fortunes and the effects of hostilities on the home-front female population were reflected in the wartime cinema of National Socialism. Film became a defining feature of the lives of the female cinema-goers of the war years and became a focal point, providing them with a means of identification and unity in the early years of the War, and a means of escapism in the more demanding and final years of the Reich. Women found their cinematic role, identity and image transformed as a direct result of the military fortunes of the Nazi State.

Evidence suggests that women were the prime target and key audience of the wartime film. The RMVP reacted to demands for a female-oriented cinema programme, often finding that their choice of cinematic portrayal was a cause for complaint amongst the soldiers at the front, believing that the cinema of the Third Reich provided their women with numerous 'negative' role models and temptations. The opinions of the men at the front were also taken into account when considering the mobilisation of women in the RMVP. By 1940, the Third Reich had effectively created a female film culture for women on the home front. Many films of the war years concentrated on human stories, with drama, comedy, musicals and romantic films at the core of the wartime cinema programme. Goebbels himself commented that a film without a female protagonist was 'too depressing'. Film journals and magazines were directed at the female audience. With the RMVP's creation of free film preview tickets for women at certain premieres, such as Gustav Ucicky's

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1940 production, *Heimkehr*, starring Paula Wessely as the main female protagonist, women were identified as the target audience for the RMVP's propagandistic message.

Some wartime German films contained a female protagonist who was sometimes either the Nazi ideal or, paradoxically, the 'fallen woman'. It is my contention that images of women in the feature films of the Third Reich, from 1939 to 1945, divided into three distinct categories, each relating to the war situation. In the initial years of the war (1939–1942), cinematic portrayals of women were based on contemporary 'realism'. Films of the Third Reich from 1939–1942 concentrated on contemporary themes, with portraits of war and social commentary regarding the hardships of the wartime situation. These films were centred on human stories, with frequent reference to the family or to a romantic relationship. Occasionally, contemporary themes were portrayed in an historical setting. The historical analogy provided the audience with a justification of present policy or a parallel to current events. Such links gave Nazi propaganda a 'factual' edge and underlined the historical antecedents of National Socialist ideology. The image of women in these films based on contemporary events, provided the female audience with a means of identification with the film. Film aided female unity, demonstrating the universality of the wartime experience. In the early years of the War, the RMVP forwarded a 'realistic' image of female identity. Women were seen to be at home, 'waiting' for the return of their menfolk and engaged in 'traditional' professions, such as nursing and teaching. Occasionally, women were employed in the 'male' professions, as bakers and tram drivers. These forms of employment were relinquished on the return of their men. Women were portrayed as mothers, wives and companions, keeping the home fires burning, whilst the men were away at the front. The portrait of the wartime experience was not entirely idealised by Nazi cinema. Film also contained images of separation, longing and the death of loved ones. Examples of this early genre of war film are Eduard v. Borsody's *Wunschkonzert* (1940), Helmut Käutner's *Auf Wiedersehen, Franziska!* (1941) and Rolf Hansen's *Die große Liebe* (1942). These portrayals of war were screened in conjunction with military success. The most popular year for 'realistic' portrayals of contemporary life was 1940, a year in which the Reich had experienced military success with the *Blitzkrieg* at its most effective and with large areas of Western Europe under Nazi control. During this period of military ascendancy, Nazi cinema screened portraits of the independent woman, as evidenced by the characters of Maria Stuart in Froelich's *Das Herz der Königin* (1940) and Dr Maria Thomas in Ucicky's *Heimkehr* (1940). These images began to decline in 1942. Rolf Hansen's discussion of the role and duty of the wartime woman in *Die große Liebe* heralded the end of contemporary portrayals. As stated in the RPL and SD reports, the public longed for escapist films, which transported them away from the wartime situation, rather than reminding them of it.

The films released between the end of 1942 and 1944 were geared towards the female home-front audience, with romance, comedy and musicals at the centre of the film programme. The drama films released in these years offered discussions of 'female issues', such as marriage, fidelity and sexual relations. The image of women corresponded to a more staid and traditional role. From the end of 1942 to 1944, women were portrayed possessing the virtues of fidelity, loyalty and companionship, as in Harlan's 1943 production *Immensee*, in which Elisabeth stays loyal to her husband, Erich, even after his death, rejecting the advances of her former sweetheart, Reinhardt. Women were also shown the consequences of deviance from such a virtuous existence, with images of the 'fallen woman'. Harlan's film *Die goldene Stadt* (1942) and the re-released *Dorf im Roten Sturm* (1941) demonstrated that sexual or romantic relations with foreigners brought death for the female protagonist engaged in such 'un-wholesome' activities. These portrayals coincided with large numbers of men away at the front and the continued employment of foreign labour into Reich territory. Equally distressing for soldiers on the front lines was the discussion of marital relations and adultery in films from 1942 to 1944. Whilst the 1939 Harlan production, *Die Reise nach Tilsit*, had allowed both adulterer and mistress to escape punishment, the films of the later years, notably 1942–44, portrayed the death of women involved in adulterous behaviour, such as Madeleine, the adulteress, in Käutner's *Romanze im Moll* (1943) and Aels, the mistress, in Harlan's *Opfergang* (1944). Cinema also offered musical extravaganzas as a form of escapist cinema, intended to lift the spirit of the home front and provide a distraction from the difficulties they were now experiencing on a daily basis, as a result of military setbacks. Marika Röck's films were the popular expression of this sentiment and offered women a colourful and happy experience, expressed in dance and song. They were not devoid, though, of contemporary socio-political content. *Die Frau meiner Träume*, starring Marika Röck and the comedienne, Grethe Weiser, poked fun at wartime shortages in food and clothing, with Röck dressed in bathroom curtains. The manufacture and planning of these escapist musicals and social dramas coincided with a difficult period in the Nazi military campaign: air raids were effecting every major German city, rationing and shortages became more apparent on the home front and Nazi Germany experienced its first defeats in Russia in December 1941.¹⁵

In 1945, the main film of the RMVP, Veit Harlan's *Kolberg*, once again portrayed a contemporary issue via historical analogy. This time, the theme was defeat and ideological victory in the face of insurmountable odds. This historical portrait of the resilience of the town of Kolberg, surrounded on all sides by the enemy, was Goebbels' legacy to the war-torn German population. The film contained a message for German women in Nettelbeck's words: '[Y]ou too have sacrificed everything, Maria! But it wasn't in vain. Death is part of victory. The greatest always stems from pain. If one bears the pain, one will be great again. You're great, Maria! You

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did you duty and were not afraid of death. You're victorious too, Maria! You too!

The image of women in the films of the Reich, therefore, was dictated by the wartime experience and divided into three distinct stages. From 1939 to 1942, at the height of Nazi military success, the image of women reflected a form of cinematic 'realism', with films portraying contemporary issues, via contemporary portraits or historical analogy. With the Nazis experiencing defeats in Russia, this genre concentrated on escapism and entertainment, with a predominance of musicals, comedies and romantic stories. The home-front cinema was dominated by 'female' issues, such as sexual and marital relations, as reflected in the high drama films of this period. In the final year of the Reich, the RMVP portrayed resilience and fortitude in the face of imminent defeat in the film *Kolberg*, completing a full circle in the image of women in the films of the Third Reich, by returning to a contemporary issue in the guise of historical analogy.

Contrary to previous historical analysis, as discussed in the introduction, it is my contention that the images of women in German wartime cinema were diverse. Surprisingly, images of women in the films of the Reich did not concentrate on motherhood, with only one main film of the period, Ucicky's *Mutterliebe* (1939) dealing solely with the concept. Women were presented in many different forms, from the dancer to the comedienne, from the dramatic heroine to the siren. Women were even cast as the 'leader-figure', directing their people in a nationalistic crusade against enemy nations. Alongside these militaristic portrayals, women were also used for racial or political comment in the films of the Reich. Kristina Söderbaum was a frequent vehicle for the RMVP's message to Aryan women regarding the danger of sexual relations with a Jew or Slav. These political, military and racial images had their success in times of victory for the Reich. The population soon rebelled against films with these contemporary and overtly political themes as the War began to turn. The cinema and the image of women from 1943 to 1944 demonstrates that Nazi cinema became reluctant to tackle contemporary subjects and retreated into the escapist musical and social drama. Female images were a crucial part of this transformation. Women took the leading roles in many films of the Reich, with men reduced to secondary characters. Actresses found that they dominated the musical and entertainment genre. Heroines controlled the social drama, which discussed issues of interest to the female audience, often unpalatable to their men at the front. The cinema of the early 1940s highlighted the shift from the male-dominated image of the early years of Nazi rule to the female film culture of the war years.

Remarkably, the end of the period of National Socialist 'realism' in the cinema and the introduction of an escapist film culture coincided with the RMVP's decision to re-employ women in the Ministry. As the majority of women became directly involved in the war effort, the image of the communal wartime experience disappeared

from the screen. The escapist programme which followed allowed women to leave behind the drudgery of an existence marked by shortages, air raids, wartime employment, the loss of loved ones and separation from husbands, sons, fathers, brothers and sweethearts. The passage of the female experience both on and off the screen fluctuated as a direct result of the War. The image of women was not as clear-cut as *Filmwoche's* initial identification of the 3 M-types: the Madonna, the Mother and the Mistress. Film offered a diversity of female image, which did not correspond to stereotypes. The war years saw the creation of a female film culture in the Reich, changing our fundamental perceptions of women's role and image under the Nazi regime.

Notes

- 1 Von Saldern, A., 'Victims or Perpetrators? Controversies about the Role of Women in the Nazi State', in Crew, D.F. (ed.), *Nazism and German Society, 1933–1945*. (Routledge, London, 1994), pp. 141–65. An important discussion of the issues raised here is in Gravenshorst, L. and Tatschurat, C., *Töchterfragen. NS Frauengeschichte*. (Kore, Freiburg, 1990).
- 2 Bock, G., 'Anti-natalism, Maternity and Paternity in National Socialist Racism', in Crew, D.F. (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 110–40. Here p. 132.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 134.
- 4 Von Saldern, A., *loc.cit.*, p. 144.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 144.
- 6 Koonz, C., *Mothers in the Fatherland. Women, the Family and Nazi Politics*. (Jonathan Cape, London, 1987).
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- 8 Burleigh, M. and Wipperman, W., *The Racial State. Germany 1933–1945*. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992), p. 266.
- 9 Von Saldern, A., *loc.cit.*, p. 148.
- 10 Stephenson, J., 'Women, Motherhood and the Family in the Third Reich', in Burleigh, M. (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 182.
- 11 Crew, D.F., *op.cit.*, p. 146.
- 12 Reese, D. and Sachse, C., 'Frauenforschung zum Nationalsozialismus. Eine Bilanz', in Gravenshorst, L. and Tatschurat, C., *op.cit.*, pp. 102–4.
- 13 Von Saldern, A., *loc.cit.*, p. 151.
- 14 Owings, A., *Frauen. German Women Recall the Third Reich*. (Penguin, London, 1993); Tobin, E. and Gibson, J., 'The Meaning of Labor: East German Women's

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Work in the Transition from Nazism to Communism', *Central European History*, vol. 28, no. 3, 1995, pp. 301–42.

- 15 The *release* of these escapist musicals occurred in the later years, 1943–44. However, the planning and production of the films coincided with the beginning of this phase of the War.

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Filmography, 1933–1945

The following filmography represents the feature films viewed in the course of research on this thesis. Information, including release dates, are taken from Alfred Bauer, *Deutscher Spielfilm Almanach, 1929-1950*. (Filmladen Christoph Winterberg, Munich, 1976 2ed. First published 1950)

Full references have been given for the main films discussed in the main body of the text, with the following coding system:

- P:** Production (Main distributor in parentheses)
L: Length in metres
Cen: Date of passing the film censor
Prem: Date of the film premiere. Berlin, unless otherwise stated
A: Film author
Dir: Director
St: Starring (main stars only)
C: Camera direction
M: Musical composer
Pr: *Prädikat* and other information

1933

Der Page vom Dalmasse-Hotel (The Bell-boy at the Dalmasse Hotel, Viktor Janson)
Flüchtlinge (Refugees, Gustav Ucicky)
Hans Westmar. (Hans Westmar, One of Many, Franz Wenzler)
Hitlerjunge Quex. (Hitler Youth Quex – Quicksilver, Hans Steinhoff)
Morgenrot (Dawn, Gustav Ucicky)
SA Mann Brand (SA Man Brand, Franz Seitz)
S.O.S. Eisberg (S.O.S. Iceberg, Arnold Fanck)
Viktor und Viktoria (Victor and Victoria, Reinhold Schünzel)
Volldampf Voraus (Full Steam Ahead, Carl Froelich)

1934

Das alte Recht (The Old Law, Igo Martin Andersen)
Der verlorene Sohn (The Prodigal Son, Luis Trenker)
Ich für dich, du für mich (Me for You, You for Me, Carl Froelich)
Maskerade (Maskerade, Austria, Willi Forst)
Schwarzer Jäger Johanna (Johanna, the Black Hunter, Johannes Meyer)

1935

Amphitryon (Reinhold Schünzel)

Barcarole (Gerhard Menzel)

Das Mädchen Johanna (The Young Girl Joan, Gustav Ucicky)

Der alte und der junge König (The Old and the Young King, Hans Steinhoff)

Die Weiße Hölle vom Piz Palü (The White Hell of Piz Palü, Arnold Fanck and G.W.Pabst)

Knock-out. Ein junges Mädchen, ein junger Mann (Knock out. A Young Girl – A Younger Man, Hns H. Zerlett)

Krach im Hinterhaus (Row in the 'Back-house', Veit Harlan)

Leichte Kavallerie (Light Cavalry, Werner Hochbaum)

Schwarze Rosen (Black Roses, Paul Martin)

1936

Allotria (Skylarking, Willi Forst)

Das Mädchen Irene (The Young Girl Irene, Reinhold Schünzel)

Der Bettelstudent (The Beggar Student, Georg Jacoby)

Der Kaiser von Kalifornien (The Kaiser from California, Luis Trenker)

Die Nacht mit dem Kaiser (The Night with the Kaiser, Erich Engel)

Ewiger Wald (The Eternal Forest, Hans Springer, Rolf von Sonjewski-Jamrowski)

Fährmann Maria (Ferryman Maria, Frank Wysbar)

Fridericus (Johannes Meyer)

Glückskinder (Lucky Kids, Paul Martin)

Savoy-Hotel 217 (Gustav Ucicky)

Schlußakkord (Final Accord, Detlef Sierck)

Truxa (Hans H. Zerlett)

Und Du, mein Schatz, fährst mit (And you, my Treasure, are coming too, Georg Jacoby)

Verräter (Traitors, Karl Ritter)

1937

Capriolen (Gustaf Gründgens)

Der Herrscher (The Ruler, Veit Harlan)

Der Mann, der Sherlock Holmes war (The Man who was Sherlock Holmes, Karl Hartl)

Der Zerbrochene Krug (The Broken Jug, Gustav Ucicky)

Die Kreutzersonate (Veit Harlan)

Die Tochter des Samurai (The Daughter of the Samurai, Arnold Fanck)

Fanny Eßler (Paul Martin)

La Habanera (Detlef Sierck)

Madame Bovary (Gerhard Lamprecht)

Filmography, 1933–1945

Mädchen für alles (Girl for Everything, Carl Boese)
Meine Freundin Barbara (My Friend Barbara, Fritz Kirchhoff)
Menschen ohne Vaterland (People without a Fatherland, Herbert Maisch)
Patrioten (Patriots, Karl Ritter)
Revolutionshochzeit (Revolution Wedding, Hans H. Zerlett)
Spiel auf der Tenne (Game on the Threshing Floor, Georg Jacoby)
Streit um den Knaben Jo (Quarrel about the Chap Jo, Erich Waschneck)
Togger (Jürgen von Allen)
Unternehmen Michael (Operation Michael, Karl Ritter)

***Urlaub auf Ehrenwort* (Leave on Word of Honour)**

P: Ufa (Ufa)
L: 2402m **Cen:** 31/12/37 **Prem:** 11/2/38 Cologne
A: Charles Klein, Felix Lützkendorf
Dir: Karl Ritter
St: Ingeborg Theek, Rolf Moebius, Fritz Kampers, Bertha Drews, Carl Raddatz
C: Günther Anders
M: Ernst Erich Buder
Pr: *Staatspolitisch und künstlerisch besonders wertvoll.* Biennale – 1938. Best Director (Karl Ritter). Post-war ban.

Zu neuen Ufern (To New Shores, Detlef Sierck)

1938

Capriccio (Karl Ritter)
Das Indische Grabmal (The Indian Tomb, Richard Eichberg)
Der Blaufuchs (The Blue Fox, K.G. Külb)
Der Tiger von Eschnapur (The Tiger from Eschnapur, Richard Eichberg)
Es leuchten die Sterne (The Stars are Twinkling, Hans H. Zerlett)
Frau Sixta (Gustav Ucicky)
Heimat (Home, Carl Froelich)
Jugend (Youth, Veit Harlan)
Olympia
Part One: *Fest der Völker* (Festival of the People, Leni Riefenstahl)
Part Two: *Fest der Schönheit* (Festival of Beauty, Leni Riefenstahl)
Pour le Mérite (For Valour – award for Bravery, Karl Ritter)
Verwehte Spuren (Covered Tracks, Veit Harlan)

1939

Befreite Hände (Freed Hands, Hans Schweikart)
Bel Ami (Beautiful Friend, Willi Forst)
D III 88 (Herbert Maisch)

Filming Women in the Third Reich

Das Unsterbliche Herz (The Immortal Heart, Veit Harlan)

Der Florentine Hut (The Florentine Hat, Wolfgang Liebeneiner)

Die Reise nach Tilsit (The Journey to Tilsit)

P: Majestic-Film GmbH (Tobis)

L: 2540m **Cen:** 25/10/39 **Prem:** 2/11/39 Tilsit

A: Veit Harlan

Dir: Veit Harlan

St: Kristina Söderbaum, Frits van Dongen, Anna Dammann, Albert Florath

C: Bruno Mondì

M: Hans-Otto Borgmann

Es war eine rauschende Ballnacht (It was a Glittering Night at the Ball, Carl Froelich)

Hallo Janine! (Carl Boese)

Kitty und die Weltkonferenz (Kitty and the World Conference, Helmut Käutner)

Kongo Expresß (Congo Express, Eduard von Borsody)

Leinen aus Irland (Linen from Ireland, Heinz Helbig)

Mutterliebe (A Mother's Love)

P: Wien-Film GmbH (Ufa)

L: 2893m **Cen:** 24/10/39 **Prem:** 19/12/39 Vienna

A: Gerhard Menzel

Dir: Gustav Ucicky

St: Käthe Dorch, Paul Hörbiger, Wolf Albach-Retty, Hans Hotter

C: Hans Schneeberger

M: Willy Schmidt-Genter

Pr: *Staatspolitisch und künstlerisch besonders wertvoll*, Post-war ban.

Paradies der Junggesellen (A Young Bachelor's Paradise, Kurt Hoffmann)

Robert Koch, der Bekämpfer des Todes (Robert Koch, the Combattant of Death, Hans Steinhoff)

Robert und Beltram (Hans H. Zerlett)

Sensationsprozeß Casilla (The Sensational Trial of Casilla, Eduard von Borsody)

Wir Tanzen um die Welt (We're Dancing around the World, Karl Anton)

1940

Achtung Feind hört mit! (Attention! The Enemy is Listening, Arthur Maria Rabenalt)

Bismarck (Wolfgang Liebeneiner)

Das Herz der Königin (The Heart of a Queen)

P: Tonfilmstudio Carl Froelich & Co. (Ufa)

L: 3056m **Cen:** 29/10/40 **Prem:** 1/11/40 Hamburg, Munich

Filmography, 1933–1945

A: Harald Braun, Jacob Geis, Rolf Reißmann
Dir: Carl Froelich
St: Zarah Leander, Willy Birgel, Maria Koppenhöfer, Lotte Koch
C: Franz Weihmayr
M: Theo Mackeben
Pr: *Künstlerisch wertvoll, kulturell wertvoll*, Post-war ban.

Das Mädchen von Fanö (The Girl from Fanö, Hans Schweikart)
Der Fuchs von Glenarvon (The Fox of Glenarvon, M.W. Kimmich)
Der Postmeister (The Post Master, Gustav Ucicky)
Die Rothschilds (Erich Waschneck)
Feinde (Enemies, Viktor Tourjansky)
Friedrich Schiller (Herbert Maisch)

Jud Süß (The Jew Süß)

P: Terra (Terra)
L: 2663m **Cen:** 6/9/40 **Prem:** 24/9/40
A: Ludwig Metzger, Eberhard Wolfgang Möller, Veit Harlan
Dir: Veit Harlan
St: Ferdinand Marian, Werner Krauß, Heinrich George, Kristina Söderbaum
C: Bruno Mondì
M: Wolfgang Zeller
Pr: *Staatspolitisch und künstlerisch besonders wertvoll, jugendwert*, Post-war ban.

Kleider machen Leute (The Clothes make the Person, Helmut Käutner)

Kora Terry

P: Ufa (Ufa)
L: 2982m **Cen:** 12/11/40 **Prem:** 27/11/40 Karlsruhe
A: Walter Wassermann, C.H. Diller
Dir: Georg Jacoby
St: Marika Röck, Will Quadflieg, Josef Sieber, Will Dohm
C: Konstantin Irmen-Tschet
M: Peter Kreuder, Frank Fux

Operette (Operetta, Willi Forst)

Stern von Rio (Star from Rio, Karl Anton)

Unser Fräulein Doktor (Our Little Miss Doctor!, Erich Engel)

Wie könntest du, Veronika (How Could You, Veronica, Milo Harbich)

Wunschkonzert (Request Contest)

P: Cine-Allianz-Tonfilmprod. GmbH (Ufa)
L: 2832m **Cen:** 21/12/40 **Prem:** 30/12/40

Filming Women in the Third Reich

A: Felix Lützkendorf, Eduard v. Borsody
Dir: Eduard v. Borsody
St: Ilse Werner, Carl Raddatz, Joachim Brennecke, Ida Wüst, Malte Jäger
C: Franz Weihmayr, Günther Anders, Carl Drews
M: Werner Bochmann
Pr: *Staatspolitisch wertvoll, künstlerisch wertvoll, volkstümlich wertvoll, jugendwert, Post-war ban.*

1941

Annelie. Die Geschichte eines Lebens (Annelie. The Story of a Life)

P: Ufa (Ufa)
L: 2700m **Cen:** 2/8/41 **Prem:** 9/9/41
A: Thea v. Harbou
Dir: Josef v. Baky
St: Luise Ullrich, Werner Krauß, Karl Ludwig Diehl, Käthe Haack
C: Werner Krien
M: Georg Haentzschel
Pr: *Staatspolitisch und künstlerisch besonders wertvoll, volkstümlich wertvoll, Best Actress Prize for Luise Ullrich at the 1941 Film Week in Venice, Post-war ban.*

Auf Wiedersehen, Franziska! (Goodbye, Franziska!)

P: (Terra) Terra
L: 2736m **Cen:** 18/4/41 **Prem:** 24/4/41 Munich
A: Helmut Käutner, Curt J. Braun
Dir: Helmut Käutner
St: Marianne Hoppe, Hans Söhnker, Hermann Speelmans, Rudolf Fernau
C: Jan Roth
M: Michael Jary
Pr: *Künstlerisch wertvoll, Post-war ban.*

Carl Peters (Herbert Selpin)

Das himmelblaue Abendkleid (The Sky-blue Evening Dress, Erich Engels)

Das schwedische Nachtigall (The Swedish Nightingale, Peter Paul Brauer)

Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten (Women are indeed better Diplomats)

P: Ufa (Ufa)
L: 2611m **Cen:** 9/10/41 **Prem:** 31/10/41
A: K.G. Külb, Gustav Kampendonk
Dir: Georg Jacoby
St: Marika Röck, Willy Fritsch, Aribert Wäscher, Hans Leibelt
C: Konstantin Irmen-Tschet, Alexander v. Lagorio

M: Franz Grothe

Pr: *Volkstümlich wertvoll*, First German Colour Film, Agfacolour.

Hauptsache glücklich (Above all, Happy!, Theo Lingen)

Heimkehr (Homecoming)

P: Wien-Film GmbH (Ufa)

L: 2632m **Cen:** 26/8/41 **Prem:** 10/10/41 Vienna

A: Gerhard Menzel

Dir: Gustav Ucicky

St: Paula Wessely, Peter Petersen, Atilla Hörbiger, Ruth Hellberg

C: Günther Anders

M: Willy Schmidt-Genter

Pr: *Film der Nation. Staatspolitisch und künstlerisch besonders wertvoll, jugendwert*, Won Prize of the Italian Ministry for People's Culture at the 1941 Film Week in Venice, Post-war ban.

Hochzeitsnacht (Wedding Night, Carl Boese)

Kameraden (Comrades, Hans Schweikart)

Kampfgeschwader Lützow (Flight Squadron Lützow, Hans Bertram)

Komödianten (The Travelling Players, G.W. Pabst)

Mein Leben für Irland (My Life for Ireland, M.W. Kimmich)

Menschen im Sturm (People in a Storm, Fritz Peter Buch)

Ohm Krüger (*Uncle Kruger*, Hans Steinhoff)

Pedro soll hängen (Pedro should Hang, Veit Harlan)

Quax, der Bruchpilot (Quax, the Crash-happy Pilot, Kurt Hoffmann)

... reitet für Deutschland (... Riding for Germany, Arthur Maria Rabenalt)

Stukas (Dive-Bombers, Karl Ritter)

Tanz mit dem Kaiser (A Dance with the Kaiser, Georg Jacoby)

U-Boot westwärts (Submarine Westwards, Günther Rittau)

1942

Der große König (The Great King, Veit Harlan)

Der verkaufte Großvater (The Bartered Grandfather, Joe Stöckel)

Die goldene Stadt (The Golden City)

P: Ufa (DFV)

L: 3004m **Cen:** 7/8/42 **Prem:** 24/11/42

A: Alfred Braun, Veit Harlan

Dir: Veit Harlan

St: Kristina Söderbaum, Rudolf Prack, Paul Klinger, Kurt Meisel, Eugen Klöpfer

C: Bruno Mondì

M: Hans-Otto Borgmann

Filming Women in the Third Reich

Pr: *Künstlerisch besonders wertvoll*, 2nd Colour film, Agfacolour. Won Prize of the President of the International Film Chamber, for the quality of the colour filming and prize for the best performance (Kristina Söderbaum) at the 1942 Biennale Film Festival in Venice, Post-war ban.

Die große Liebe (The Great Love)

P: Ufa (DFV)

L: 2675m **Cen:** 6/6/42 **Prem:** 12/6/42

A: Peter Groll, Rolf Hansen

Dir: Rolf Hansen

St: Zarah Leander, Viktor Staal, Paul Hörbiger, Grethe Weiser

C: Franz Weihmayr

M: Michael Jary

Pr: *Staatspolitisch und künstlerisch wertvoll, volkstümlich wertvoll*, Post-war ban.

Fronttheater (Front Theatre, Arthur Maria Rabenalt)

Liebeskomödie (Love Comedy, Theo Lingen)

Rembrandt (Hans Steinhoff)

Sieben Jahre Glück (Seven Years of Happiness, Ernst Marischka)

Viel Lärm um Nixi (Much ado about Nixi, Erich Engel)

Wiener Blut (Viennese Blood, Willi Forst)

Wir machen Musik (We Make Music, Helmut Käutner)

1943

Damals (Back Then, Rolf Hansen)

Das Bad auf der Tenne (The Bath on the Threshing Floor, Volker von Collande)

Der kleine Grenzverkehr (Small Scale Border Traffic, Hans Deppe)

Der weiße Traum (The White Dream, Geza von Cziffra)

Die goldene Spinne (The Golden Spider, Erich Engels)

Großstadtmelodie (Big City Melody, Wolfgang Liebeneiner)

Immensee

P: Ufa (DFV)

L: 2592m **Cen:** 28/9/43 **Prem:** 17/12/43

A: Alfred Braun, Veit Harlan

Dir: Veit Harlan

St: Kristina Söderbaum, Carl Raddatz, Paul Klinger, Carola Toelle

C: Bruno Mondì

M: Wolfgang Zeller

Pr: *Künstlerisch wertvoll, kulturell wertvoll, volkstümlich wertvoll*, Post-war ban.

Kohlhiesels Töchter (Kohlhiesel's Daughters, Kurt Hoffmann)

Münschhausen (Josef von Baky)

Nacht ohne Abschied (A Night without Parting, Erich Waschneck)

***Romanze im Moll* (Romance in a Minor Key)**

P: Tobis (DFV)

L: 2728m **Cen:** 28/1/43 **Prem:** 25/6/43

A: Willy Clever, Helmut Käutner

Dir: Helmut Käutner

St: Marianne Hoppe, Paul Dahlke, Ferdinand Marian, Siegfried Breuer

C: Georg Bruckbauer

M: Lothar Brühne, Werner Eisbrenner

Pr: *Künstlerisch besonders wertvoll.*

1944

Das Herz muß Schweigen (The Heart must be Silenced, Gustav Ucicky)

***Die Frau meiner Träume* (The Woman of my Dreams)**

P: Ufa (DFV)

L: 2721m **Cen :** 2/8/44 **Prem:** 25/8/44

A: Johann Vaszary, Gerog Jacoby

Dir: Georg Jacoby

St: Marika Röck, Wolfgang Lukschy, Walter Müller, Grethe Weiser

C: Konstantin Irmen-Tschet

M: Franz Grothe

Pr: 7th Colour film, Agfacolour.

Die Familie Buchholz (The Buchholz Family, Carl Froelich)

Große Freiheit Nr. 7 (Great Freedom No. 7, Helmut Käutner)

Ich brauche Dich (I Need You, Hans Schweikart)

Junge Adler (Young Eagles, Alfred Weidenmann)

***Opfergang* (Sacrifice)**

P: Ufa (DFV)

L: 2682m **Cen:** 14/2/44 **Prem:** 8/12/44

A: Veit Harlan, Alfred Braun

Dir: Veit Harlan

St: Carl Raddatz, Kristina Söderbaum, Irene v. Meyendorff

C: Bruno Mondì

M: Hans-Otto Borgmann

Pr: *Künstlerisch besonders wertvoll*, 6th Colour Film, Agfacolour, Post-war ban.

1945

With the Reich entering its final year of war and the imminent collapse of the regime, many films shot in late 1944/early 1945 were never finished or never premiered. Many films from this year were edited and premiered in 1951, after release from the Occupation Powers. These films are, therefore, difficult to locate in the original (1945) format. The following films were viewed in the original format:

Kolberg

P: Ufa (DFV)

L: 3026m **Cen:** 26/1/45 **Prem:** 30/1/45 *Atlantikfestung* (Atlantic Fortress)
La Rochelle and Berlin

A: Veit Harlan, Alfred Braun

Dir: Veit Harlan

St: Heinrich George, Kristina Söderbaum, Paul Wegener, Horst Caspar

C: Bruno Mondt

M: Norbert Schultze

Pr: *Film der Nation, Staatspolitisch und künstlerisch besonders wertvoll, kulturell wertvoll, volkstümlich wertvoll, anerkennenswert, volksbildend, jugendwert, Post-war ban.*

Unter den Brücken (Under the Bridges, Helmut Käutner)

Archival Resources

Germany:

Bundesarchiv, Koblenz.

R 109 I

R 109 II Files of Ufa, Terra, Tobis, Wien and Berlin Film Companies. (Full Collection)

Bundesarchiv, Potsdam.

R43II *Reichskanzlei.* (Various)

R 55 Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda.
(1-1462. Full Collection)

R56I *Reichskulturkammer.*
(1-147. Full Collection)

R56VI *Reichsfilmkammer.*
(1-562. Full Collection)

R58 *Reichssicherheitshauptamt.*
(145-990)

NS 18 *Reichspropagandaleiter.*
(1-1357. Full Collection)

Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv, Berlin.

Film viewing, stills location and documentary files, containing *Illustrierte Film-Kurier* issues, press releases, contemporary documentation, script excerpts and interviews with the key actors and actresses.

Bundesarchiv Außenstelle III, Berlin Zehlendorf (formerly the Berlin Document Center).

Numerous personal files of actresses working during the Third Reich.

United States of America:

National Archives, Washington D.C.

T 70 Captured files for the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda.* (1-78)

Filming Women in the Third Reich

Hoover Institution for War, Peace and Revolution, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

Papers of Hans Hinkel, *Reichsfilmlintendant*. Speeches and Writings 1924–1944. ID CSU 2YY222-A

Papers of Gertrud Scholz-Klink, *Reichsfrauenführerin*. 1935 speech series including a speech to German women by Adolf Hitler. ID CSU 2YY488-A

Great Britain:

British Film Institute, London.

Departments: Viewing, Stills and Poster collection, Archive, Reading Rooms and Viewing Loans.

Viewing film copies, stills location and various documentary material, including SHAEF report and Catalogue for Forbidden Films, cuttings collection, German film periodical collection (1933-1945 and contemporary) and extensive use of reading room materials.

Imperial War Museum, London.

Departments: Reading Room, Document Department, Film, Sound and Photographic Archive.

Various publications (1933–1945 and Contemporary), film viewing, film documentation (Catalogue of Forbidden Films), sound archive interviews and Nuremberg War Crime Trial proceedings, unpublished documentation (unedited Goebbels Diary fragments and files of German and British war propagandists), photographs and stills.

Public Record Office, Kew, London.

FO 1023 Banning of National Socialist films

FO 1056 Ufa Records
 Banning of National Socialist films
 Film working party.

FO 1060 Trial of Veit Harlan, Hamburg (British Zone), July, 1948
 SHAEF records
 Film banning procedure
 De-Nazification
 National Socialist Organisation Intelligence including RMfVuP

Archival Resources

Wiener Library, London.

Various publications (1933–1945 and Contemporary), clippings collection, film collection, NSDAP *Hauptarchiv* (*Reichspropagandaleiter*), various materials from the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte*, Munich and various unpublished reports (including U.S. Military reports on film in Nazi Germany.)

Other Libraries and Institutions:

The Bodleian Library, Oxford.

The British Library, London.

Goethe Institut Library, London.

Institute of Historical Research, London.

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Periodicals

In the course of my research, I have consulted many periodicals. These periodicals held many small pieces of information, which did not warrant a full citation. For example, film periodicals contained cast lists or film star obituaries, which provided a career summary. All articles dealing with film in the Third Reich in more detail have been cited in full in the main section of the bibliography.

Film

Contemporary.

Cinématographie Française

Daily Film Renter

Film Weekly

Filmkurier

Filmwelt

Filmwoche

Illustrierte Film-Kurier

Licht, Bild, Bühne

Monthly Film Bulletin

Pathéscope Monthly

Picture-Goer

Today's Cinema

Post War.

American Film

BUFC Newsletter

Cahiers du Cinéma

Cine-Review

Cinema

Cinémonde

Classic Images

Daily Cinema

Filming Women in the Third Reich

Ecran
Evangelischer Film Beobachter
Film
Film and History
Film Comment
Film Echo
Film Forum
Film Français
Film Quarterly
Film und Fernsehen
Filmblätter
Filmkritik
Films
Films and Filming
Films in Review
Filmstudio
Filmwoche
Flickers
Focus on Film
Frauen und Film
Hollywood Reporter
Journal of the Producer's Guild of America
Kino-Information
Mein Film
Positif
Quarterly Review of Film Studies
Retro
Screen International
Sight and Sound
Silent Picture
Spektrum Film
Take One
Technicien du Film
Télérama
Time Out

Historical

American Historical Review
Central European History
European Studies Review

Select Bibliography

Gender and History
German History
Historical Journal
Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television
Historical Research
Historical Studies
Historische Zeitschrift
History
History Today
History Workshop Journal
Holocaust and Genocide Studies
Imperial War Museum Review
Journal of Contemporary History
Journal of Modern History
Past and Present
Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine
Revue Historique
The Historian

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